

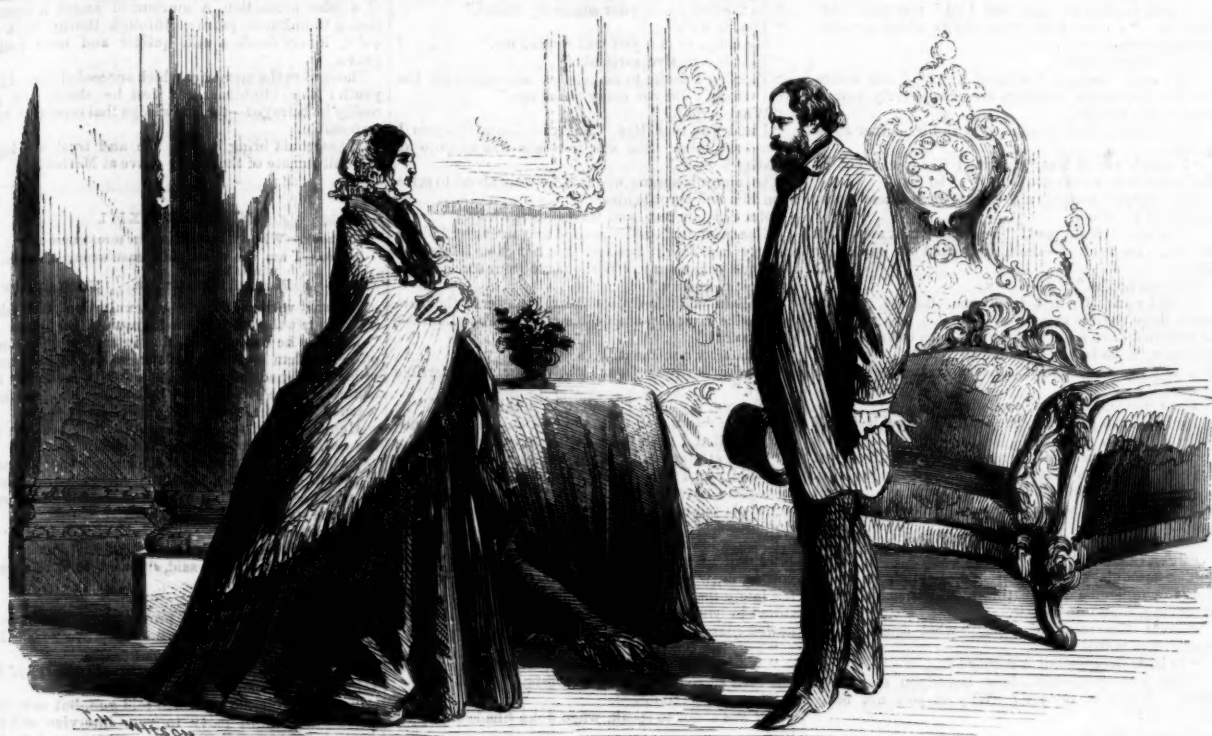
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[MADAME DELAUME THREATENS JOHN SHADOW.]

A YOUNG GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY.

By VANE IRETON ST. JOHN,

Author of "The Queen of Night," "In Spite of the World," &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

Stranger.—I bring thee tidings of joy, my lord.
Alaric.—By my faith, the joy is so mantled in sorrow,
that I can scarce perceive it. Old Play.

WHEN John Shadow entered the room after the interview between Granby Saville and Lady Castleton, he at once saw that something unpleasant had occurred.

He was always, however, prepared for emergencies. He sat down, therefore, calmly saying:

"My young friend, you seem gloomy."

Granby Saville looked up.

He was prepared to fire up and launch forth in indignant invectives.

But the calm, quiet face of Shadow disarmed him.

"I am gloomy," he said, settling himself in his seat and gazing into the fire.

"And why?"

"Because you are playing me false."

Had John Shadow been a man of ordinary capacity, he would have been greatly disconcerted, and probably betrayed himself by a start.

As it was, he only smiled placidly, leaned back in his arm-chair, placed the tips of his fingers together, and said:

"Indeed! and how, may I ask?"

"By representing yourself as Captain de Grey, whereas you are in truth John Shadow," replied Saville.

Again the placid smile.

"Oh! you have discovered that at last, then," said Shadow.

"Yes, discovered it by chance; when you should have told me yourself."

"There you are wrong, my young friend. I ought

not to have told you, and you ought not to have made the discovery. However, since you have done so, the evil is accomplished, and cannot be remedied."

Granby gazed at him in astonishment.

"Is that all you have to say?" he asked; "do you intend to give me no explanation of your conduct?"

"Yes, I will explain. I am, as you say, John Shadow," replied that worthy. "I have been the victim of terrible misfortunes, and a cloud rests upon my name. This cloud I have vainly endeavoured to clear from me since I have been in England, and it may yet be years ere I can bring together the evidence necessary to prove my innocence. To pass under my own name, therefore, would not only be to ruin myself, but ruin your cause. Who would believe in the identity of an heir, brought forward by a man who bears upon him the curse and the shame of a felon?"

"True," said Granby Saville, "true! Yet to me, at least, you might have been explicit."

"It would have done no good," returned Shadow; "it might have done great harm. But come, you could not blame me, for I have now been far more explicit than you. Tell me, who has given you this information? When I left you but an hour ago, you knew nothing."

"A woman has been here," said Granby, "you can tell to whom I allude?"

"Yes, I guess; for there exists but one woman in the world whose interest it is to thwart me. It must have been Lady Castleton."

"It was."

Granby Saville then narrated to him minutely, the scene between himself and the marchioness.

John Shadow remained wrapped in thought for some time after the young man had completed his narration.

Then he said firmly:

"One thing only has to be decided: and that is whether you intend to stick to me or not?"

"I will, provided there is no imposture!"

"There is none!" cried Shadow, "you are the rightful heir to the Castleton estate, though I am not Leonard de Grey. Lady Castleton will commit any

perjury to keep you from your right; but fear her not, the proofs are clear, and in spite of her you shall be marquis. But before we proceed further, there must be a thorough understanding—you must trust to me as I have to trust to you."

Had the stake been less, Granby Saville would gladly have availed himself of this opportunity to cast off the yoke of Shadow's influence.

But before him was, on one side, a long vista of sorrow, poverty, and the loss of all most dear in life; while on the other were wealth, distinction, and love.

So he gave his hand to the returned convict, and said:

"I leave all to you."

"That is well," replied John Shadow, returning his grasp warmly, and smiling, "you will find in the end you are very right. This woman is, I can assure you, a fiend in human shape. She would destroy you with her own hands, sooner than allow you to dispossess her son. However, fight as she may, it is useless since I have now found every link in the chain."

"You will want me in London then, it may be?" said Granby Saville.

"No, not at present. You may go down to the Mansfields to-morrow, but it may be but for a short visit, since to-morrow evening will be a crisis in your fate."

So on the next day Granby Saville departed on his journey, and John Shadow was left alone.

Early in the evening he betook himself to the house of the marquis.

He chose the evening because at night he feared no recognition.

He had on this occasion discarded his false beard and moustache.

He wished to appear as like as possible to the real John Shadow.

The servant recognized him as Mr. Edward Courtney, and imagined at once that he desired to see the marchioness.

"My lady is from home," he said aloud. Shadow smiled.

"It is the marquis I desire to see."

Jacob Messenger, who was standing in the hall

looked at him aghast for a moment, and then went away in haste.

He hastened, in fact, to apprise Madame Delaume. In a few minutes after, Shadow and the marquis stood face to face.

"Be seated, sir, I beg," said the nobleman, with languid politeness, as he himself glided into a chair. "I recognized the name on your card as that of a friend of my wife's. May I ask why I am honoured with a visit this evening?"

"I will explain at once, my lord," returned John Shadow. "I come here upon affairs which concern the happiness of your son."

The marquis started.

"My son!" he said, "what of him? I can assure you Mr. Reginald's prospects are most eagerly looked after by his mother."

There was a shade of annoyance in his manner as he spoke.

"I speak not of him," returned Shadow, "but of that other son, whom you believe to be lost."

The marquis started up, all his listlessness gone, and paced the room.

"You are mad, sir, mad!" he cried, "talk not to me of him. He is dead—dead, murdered at our very door."

"It was not he."

"Bah! man. Do not insult me—do not rake up again those terrible memories. Do you think I wish to believe I have a son that he may turn out some vile impostor, if he be not struck dead before I see him? No, no, my son is dead. Let him and me rest in peace."

For a moment Shadow was silent.

He knew this grief was but evanescent, yet he feared to be too eager.

"I respect your grief; I respect your motives, yet against your own wishes, I must give you hope. Your son is not dead. The man who was murdered at your door was my son, who came to give you news of yours."

"And who are you?"

"John Shadow."

The marquis uttered a gasping sound, as if he found a difficulty in breathing, and then, pale and trembling, sank into a chair.

"Great Heavens," he cried, "what dream—what mad dream is this?"

"It is no dream—but a reality!"

"But you—you—here, how have you discovered this? Where is my son? Why do you not bring him here?"

Shadow smiled.

"You inundate me with questions," he said, "none of which I can answer in a moment. How I discovered him, I will explain to you another time."

"Why not now?"

"Because my story is long—my interview must be short."

"And why so?"

"Because were I to be seen with you, your son would be destroyed."

The marquis gazed at him in bewilderment.

"What mean you?" he cried. "There is no one in this house whose interest it is to thwart me in such a thing as this."

John Shadow smiled meaningly.

"Is there not?" he said. "I fear you are mistaken. Is there not one who loses all by the safe arrival of your son?"

"I still do not understand you," returned the marquis, "for if you speak of Reginald, I do not fear him."

"I speak of Reginald, truly," said Shadow, "but he is only the motive, his mother is the agent."

The marquis muttered what seemed to be a curse.

"John Shadow!" he exclaimed, fiercely, as he gazed full into the face of his former secretary; "once before you came between me and the one I loved; told me of her falseness—persuaded me of it, for I trusted you implicitly. Your life since then has made me doubt whether I was not too hasty—whether I did not sacrifice the love of a good and virtuous woman at the shrine of a momentary passion. Do you think, then, I will believe you, if you tell me that my second wife also is my enemy?"

There was a rustling amid the leaves on the verandah without, as he pronounced these words.

John Shadow started up, and rushed to the open casement.

But no one was there.

The intruder—if intruder there had been—was gone.

"By your leave, my lord," he said, "I will close the window; there seem to be listeners here."

As the marquis did not answer, he bolted the glass-doors, and returned to his seat.

"I expected opposition," he said; "but not from you."

"From whom, then?"

"From Lady Isabel."

"Naturally she will resist an impostor."

"But I swear to you this is no impostor—he is your son, and I can prove it."

The marquis, in spite of himself, was carried away. He could not refuse belief to the earnest words of the designing man before him.

"But if he be my son, what then? Can you explain to me your motive? What interest have you in restoring him to me?"

"In the first place, your son is my friend."

"That is nothing."

"Secondly, he and you will reward me."

"That is a motive, certainly."

"Thirdly, I desire to make some atonement for the great wrong I did you many years ago."

"What wrong?"

"I told you that Mrs. Conyers—Laura Conyers I mean—was false. She was not—she was as pure as Chastity herself."

The marquis sprang up, as if he were about to seize upon him and throttle him.

John Shadow rose, and warned him away.

"Hands off, my lord!" he cried; "you might find me an ugly customer. Besides, it is not your interest to make me your enemy. Without me your son remains for ever unknown."

"Villain—double-dyed villain!" muttered the marquis, as he sank down upon his chair. "Poor Laura—poor Laura!"

Then, after a moment, he added:

"And what was your motive for this terrible crime?"

"To you, my lord, I decline to speak of that," he answered; "suffice it that Laura Conyers was innocent, and that I wish to do justice to her son."

"Well, at present, I will say no more. Restore to me my child, and I will reward you; though I can never bless you—never—never! But you speak strangely of Isabel; tell me, what do you dare to tell me of Lady Castleton?"

Shadow lowered his voice.

"I will mention no names," he said; "I will leave you to draw your own conclusions. Have you not felt lately that your strength has been strangely restored to you—have you not felt renewed life—renewed energy?"

"Yes, what of that?"

"You have felt this, my lord, because a poisoner has been stayed in her career of crime."

The marquis trembled.

He was about to speak, when John Shadow stopped him.

"Nay, hear me out," he said, "I mention no name; but ever since your arrival in London, you have until very lately, been the victim of poison. Of late it has been arrested in its progress, because in your household you have a faithful servant."

"Who is that?"

"Madame Delaume."

The marquis gazed at him in complete bewilderment.

"You are surprised, my lord!" exclaimed Shadow; "but it is so. One who fears for the fortunes of her son is destroying you—one who has been treated kindly is saving you."

"I cannot believe you!"

"Believe me or not as you please," said the other. "I, however, see the danger, and recognize its extent. I wish to make reparation for a wrong, not to be dragged down by the folly of others into a worse abyss of error. I, if you refuse to aid me, will still watch over the safety of Laura's son."

He rose to go.

The marquis detained him.

"Nay!" he said, "I do not refuse to aid you. Tell me how I can?"

"In the first instance," returned Shadow, "your visits must take place at my chambers. If I am seen here, all will be lost. Lady Castleton has already been to my chambers in private, has seen your son, has denounced me to him as an impostor, has called him first a dupe, and then a conspirator, and sworn that he shall not step between her son and his inheritance. Danger is abroad, therefore; and we must avoid it. Can you recognize your son by any mark?"

The marquis shook his head sadly.

"No," he said, "I cannot; if his poor mother were alive, it would be far different; but Laura is dead."

He stopped, overcome with emotion.

"In a week, you shall see your son," said John Shadow, "till then farewell."

The marquis answered not.

The name of Laura had already blotted out all thoughts of outward things, save that one thought which John Shadow had brought back to him from the dreary solitudes of a life that was gone.

That one thought constituted the oasis in the great wilderness of his mind, the one green spot towards which his soul yearned through the darkness of the bewildering past.

Golden youth, golden curls, golden dreams, honeyed words, which came sighing through that past's great desert like the plaintive whisps of an Arabian harp, pleasant wanderings in that youth's broad idle pathway; those golden curls, drooping over a fluttering heart—tremulous lips telling those golden dreams. This was the one green spot in his heart, the oasis in his wilderness, the freshening balm to his wounded and crushed spirit.

Then came the dreary desert; the dread remembrance of a false accusation, a murmur of anger, a separation, a tumultuous journey through thorny ways, a quiet, lonely death, a still quieter and more lonely grave.

These were the memories which succeeded those of his youth: the blighting fear lest he should now in reality be betrayed—the knowledge that reparation was impossible.

What could bring back to life and trust and hope the still inmate of the lonely grave at Merton?

CHAPTER XXIII

Allanotte.—Who art thou who thus threatenest me?

Duchess.—I am she whom thou hast wronged, and in whose breast

Hate still is paramount. The Black Knight.

It was with a feeling of exultation that John Shadow left the room of the Marquis of Castleton.

Little as he had effected, the interview had passed off better than he had expected: he had told the worst of his story, had impressed the marquis favourably by confessing the wrong he had done him, and had warned him of the marchioness.

He determined to let the seeds he had sown lie in the soil a week or so again disturbed them.

Thinking, of course, that their conference had been a private one, he was, not unnaturally, startled when an arm was laid on his in the passage as he retired from the room.

He started round.

It was Madame Delaume.

"John Shadow," she said, "I wish to have a word with you."

The bad man trembled.

This woman, who was proving herself more than a match for Lady Castleton might prove so also for him.

"You are mistaken—my name is Courtney," he said; "permit me to pass."

"A rustle on the verandah told you, but now, that there was a third party to your interview with the marquis," returned the French governess, quietly. "I was that third party. I heard you tell the marquis that you were John Shadow. Therefore, spare yourself the trouble of further denial. Grant me a short interview—you will not regret it."

"Certainly, madam," he said; "where is it to take place?"

"Follow me," returned the Frenchwoman; "I will lead you to a room where we shall be undisturbed."

At the end of the passage was a small chamber surrounded by books, and very dimly lighted.

Into this, Madame Delaume ushered her guest, and closed the door.

"John Shadow," she said, "I know more of your proceedings than you think."

"Indeed!" replied the reprobate; "that may be the means of saving much trouble. In the first place, then—"

"You are acting a double part. You are warning Lord Castleton against the marchioness—and still inducing her to destroy her husband. What good do you propose to yourself by thus thwarting your own plans?"

Shadow smiled.

"Were I acting as you say," he answered, "no doubt it would not be without a reason; but allow me to observe that, if you have sought this interview in order to glean from me any ideas for the future, you have wasted your time. I am a reserved man, Madame Delaume, and am not to be defeated by a woman's cunning."

The eyes of the governess flashed fire.

"Perhaps not," she cried, "by a woman's cunning, but by a woman's hate!"

She paused as if she had said too much.

Shadow gazed at her in silence.

"Remember," she said, "your antecedents, as connected with the Conyers family, are not over bright. You destroyed—false, lying knave that you were—the fair fame of Laura Conyers—you drove her from her home, because she was not vile enough to listen to your addresses—you then, by order of Lady Isabel, robbed the father of his child; and, now that you have murdered that child, you come to foist upon him an impostor."

There was a tone of inquiry, mingled in all this with her anger.

"You are wrong, madam," cried John Shadow; "I swear you are wrong. This young man, of whom I

said, "You swear it?" said, Madame Delaume, grasping his arm.

"I do."

"Then why not bring him hither?—why not declare it to the world?"

"Because one link is missing in my chain of evidence. Long years have passed since the child was stolen—by his features none can recognize him. His papers and his story prove him to be the lost heir; but it requires some personal mark to identify him. The marquis knows this; not—his mother is dead. We must trust, therefore, to chance—to the instincts of affection."

"I see; and it is thus you think to pass off an impostor upon the Marquis of Castleton; but it shall not be so—the man who died was not his son. I know it—yet I tell you that never again shall he be deceived—never shall the man who is compassing his death bring into this house an impostor to rob him of his wealth."

A smile of disdain wreathed itself over Shadow's lips.

"And who, may I ask, madam," he said, "could prevent it, if it were so?"

"I, sir; I will prevent it!"

"You?"

"Yes, I—Laura, Marchioness of Castleton, the victim of your foul lie. I will prevent this grievous wrong being done."

John Shadow was crushed.

The blow struck home.

With eyes gleaming with fierce triumph, the woman he had injured looked down from the height of her purity upon the depth of his degraded fall.

"Yes," she continued; "long, long years have I waited for the hour when you and I should meet, face to face, and I should tell you of my triumph. I have defeated your deadly scheme against my husband's life, I have now to defeat your scheme against his honour. I have waited for you, I say, because this woman who calls herself Marchioness of Castleton is too weak, too insignificant to fear. Her only strength was the strength of her malignity, and that even has failed her. I could sweep her from my path at any moment by simply appearing."

"Then why not do so?"

"Because I will never show my face in the light of day again until my innocence has been proved—at least to the marquis."

Shadow's courage returned.

"She did not hear all my words to the marquis, then," he thought; "she does not know that I have already declared her pure!"

"You, too, have been a deceiver," he said, aloud; "you deceived your husband into a second marriage by proclaiming your death. You, too, are a schemer and an impostor, and if you dare to thwart me I will inform the marquis of your presence. You know what would result—you would be torn from your children, and once more be an outcast and a wanderer on the earth."

"That I will risk," returned Laura (or, as we must continue to call her, Madame Delaume). "If this be my son whom you bring hither, I will aid you—if not, I will thwart you, even if it destroy for ever my cherished hope of restoration to his heart."

"Are you, then, certain that you could recognize your son?"

"I am."

"There are marks, then, upon his person?"

"There are."

"What are they?"

Madame Delaume smiled.

"You must not think, John Shadow," she said, "that I am to be caught in that manner. I am a woman, it is true, but misfortune has given me the strength of a man and has sharpened my intellect. Information you will never get from me. You have heard who I am—that is enough. I have ever been your enemy—I am so now. Were you to restore me to my husband and my son, I could do no more than thank you—my heart could never melt towards the man who has been the blight and the curse of my life!"

Almost the same words as the marquis had spoken. "Cannot we make some compromise?"

"How—for what?"

"If I proclaim to your husband your innocence, will you consent to declare the stranger to be your son?"

Madame Delaume hesitated.

It was but for a moment.

"No," she said—"no. I love my husband, and in that I will not deceive him. I love my son—he may still be living, and I will not rob him of his future!"

Shadow rose.

"Good, madam," he said; "we understand one another now, and can take measures accordingly."

Madame Delaume detained him.

"Stay," she cried; "this young man whom you call Ralph Conyers, and whom you spirited away from Trueman's hotel, in order that no one might see him before he was duly instructed, may, after all, be my son. May I see him?"

Shadow eyed her suspiciously.

"Under what circumstances?" he asked.

"Oh! you may be present," she said, "and of course, I shall appear only as Madame Delaume."

"Very well, I agree."

"When—when shall I come?" she cried, with eagerness—an eagerness she could not repress.

"In a week; he is now in the country on a visit to a Mrs. Mansfield, whose daughter he hopes to make his wife."

Madame Delaume gazed at him a moment in a speechless ecstasy, caused by some strong and sudden emotion.

"Mansfield!" she cried. "Where does she live?"

"At Ellersby Grange, close by—, in—shire. Do you know her?"

"She was an acquaintance years ago. But of that another time. He is, you say, staying there, and in a week I shall see him in London?"

"Yes; in a week."

"Good. I will now let you out. Remember, this interview is a private one!"

"Oh, yes! as far as I am concerned, it shall be. But I am in no hurry to go. I wish to see Lady Isabel, if I can, before I go."

Madame Delaume smiled derisively.

"You wish, I see, to have a conference with your fellow-conspirator—to take a round of the house, in fact. But on this occasion you are disappointed—Lady Isabel, as you call her, is at the opera."

"My words to her will keep," said John Shadow, "farewell."

When he had gone, Madame Delaume returned to her room and sat wrapped in thought.

"What if I go down to Mrs. Mansfield's and see him there?" she thought. "Yet—no—it would perhaps irritate this man, whose enmity I cannot yet afford to brave. No—no; I must wait and be patient. I have waited so many years, that a few days can make no difference."

When Lady Isabel returned home from the opera, she found the marquis awaiting her in the drawing-room.

"I have heard great news this night, Isabel," he said, with a searching glance.

"Indeed?"

"Yes; of my son."

"Some relic has been found—some friend has been discovered, I suppose," said the lady with apparent listlessness as she sank back into the easy-chair he proffered her.

It was but apparent—this quietude.

In her inmost heart she dreaded that some revelation—fatal to her interests had been made to her husband.

"Not so," said the marquis, "not so. I have heard news which has brought joy to my heart. Ralph, my son, is not dead—I shall see him within a week."

Lady Isabel turned deadly pale.

"We are again," she said, "to have the same discussion. My son is to be sacrificed to an impostor."

The marquis smiled bitterly.

"Every one cannot be an impostor," he answered.

"You said that the young man who died in Thornton Wood was an impostor. When he was dead, he no longer was an impostor, but my son. However, I have discovered he was not my son. Ralph Conyers still lives, and in one week I shall clasp him to my heart!"

Lady Isabel was silent.

Hate, revenge, impotent rage, were swelling her heart.

Her malignity was such at that moment, that she could have destroyed the man before her, though he was her husband.

At length she said:

"You will excuse me, I am sure, for not participating in your joy. I imagined your son to be dead—your sorrow to be buried with him; and now you are about to rake up your old grief, at the bidding of some stranger, whose interest it is to deceive you."

"It is useless," returned the marquis, somewhat sternly, "to speak to you upon this subject. You regard my son as a rival to your son. Perhaps this is natural. But yet, remember, that were your child lost, you would move heaven and earth to find him, and restore him to the place he had lost. What then? Am I not to have the same privilege of love? Am I not entitled to love my son as you love yours? But come, madam, I will say no more. Time will prove whether this story is a true one or a false. Till then, let it rest."

Lady Isabel approached her husband—kissed his brow, and then in silence left the room.

"A week, he says," she murmured; "a week. It is but a short time—yet the fate of all must be decided

within it. My husband must not see his son—before the time for that interview has arrived, the grave must hide from me my greatest fear."

CHAPTER XXIV.

What was it thus that followed him
O'er river, dale, and hill?
Whose form was it that on his track,
No matter if he turned back
Or onward pressed, still held his course?
Was it the Phantom of Remorse?
Or Hate, more bitter still? *Edmond Hunt.*

"My stay here will, I fear, be much shorter than I intended," said Granby Saville, one evening—the third after his arrival—as he and Clara were walking through the grounds.

"Why so, dear Granby?" asked Clara, in some alarm.

"Because, dearest, my friend, upon whom I depend for everything, has written to me to say that I must be in London in four days. The long-dreaded interview will then take place."

Clara smiled.

"What is this terrible interview?" she asked, in some amusement.

"The interview with my father."

"Why is it terrible?"

"Because there is no absolute proof of my identity; because he may regard me as an impostor, drive me from his house, may take from me my name, my fortune, my dearest hopes, because he fears again to be deceived."

Clara was silent.

"What after all," she thought, "if he were being deceived?—what if the Marquis of Castleton were to refuse to receive him?"

"Never mind, dearest Granby," she said. "Let him do so; let him reject you—I will not reject you, I will love you still!"

He looked lovingly in her face, but said nothing.

"And you, dear Granby," she said; "you will never cease to love me, will you—no matter what others may say to you of me?"

"No, my best love; never, never! But what could they say of my sweet, my innocent Clara?"

They had just reached the house.

It was just six, the sun was setting, and in the golden rays stood Gabriel Desney, upon the broad steps of the grange.

True, that the sun shines for all; if it had made exceptions, it would never have shone for him.

His broad brow was contracted, his lips were compressed together vindictively, his eyes gleamed with a baleful light.

He scowled down upon the pair with infinite bitterness.

When they approached him, the cloud vanished as if by enchantment.

"Miss Mansfield," he said, "will you grant me five minutes' interview?"

Granby glanced at her.

"Do not go," he said, "I cannot spare you yet."

Clara flushed crimson.

She felt she must go with Gabriel Desney. She knew that he had something to tell her which affected her happiness.

"Yes, dear Granby, let me go. I will not be absent many minutes."

Granby looked perturbed.

"If Mr. Desney has the first claim," he said, "pray let it be so."

Clara looked imploringly up in his face:

"I am yours—truly, faithfully yours," she said; "why then allow cruel words to pass your lips for nothing? You have secrets from me—I have one simple secret from you. Do not blame me because my love for you induces me to conceal something from you which might make you unhappy, though it would not lessen your love for me."

"Forgive me, Clara," he answered, pressing her hand fondly; "go with Mr. Desney, but do not leave me long alone."

Clara smiled, took Desney's arm, and walked with him down the steps and through the shady avenues.

"What is this wonderful information, Mr. Desney," said Clara, with mock solemnity, "which you are in so great a hurry to impart to me?"

"I am in no humour for jesting, Clara," returned Gabriel. "I have discovered that you are deceiving me."

Clara laughed.

"Indeed?"

"You will not treat the matter so lightly perhaps," said he, savagely, "when you hear that this very evening I intend to inform Mr. Saville who and what you are."

The girl's manner changed.

"You are mad," she cried; "what have I done that you should thus betray me?"

"You have deceived me—you have promised to keep silent, and to obliterate from the mind of Louisa the

effects of your fatal warning, and yet, in spite of all, you have been advising her against me, and she consequently is cold and distant to me."

"You are wrong," cried Clara, indignantly; "you are cruelly wronging me. With you and Louisa I have done. I interfere in no way."

"It is false," exclaimed Desney, in anger, "for I have it from her own lips."

"She has betrayed me," thought Clara. She showed, however, no emotion.

"What has she said, then?" she asked. "I asked her to marry me in the course of a month," he answered. "She then told me that you had advised her not to marry for a year."

"So I did—she is a mere child."

"You said you would not interfere?"

"No—not as against you—but I certainly think that Louisa is too young to give up her home and trust herself to any man."

"And least of all, of course, Gabriel Desney!" sneered he; "never mind, you have used quiet counsels against me; I will use the same against you. This night, Granby Saville shall be taken into my quiet counsels."

Clara trembled. But not with fear. It was with hate!

"Very well," she said, disengaging her arm; "very well. It is war again between us; we shall see who will suffer most."

She moved towards the house. Gabriel walked by her side.

"So you make no terms of peace?"

"None."

"Will you not advise Louisa to reconsider her decision?"

"No."

"Will you make no compromise?"

"None."

Gabriel Desney gazed at her in surprise.

A dread, a chill invaded his heart.

"What do you mean? what can you mean?" he murmured. "Do you wish to cast aside for ever the love of Granby Saville, for the sake of revenge?"

"No," she muttered, "I want to have done with it altogether."

With these words, spoken with bitter emphasis, and with a scowl of hate, she went into the house.

Gabriel gazed at her in astonishment, now not unmixed with alarm.

"What can she mean?" he murmured, as he followed into the house; "her eyes burn like coals of fire. I verily believe she would kill me if I offended again."

Within the hall, a stranger was waiting for him.

He touched his hat respectfully.

"Mr. Desney, I believe?"

"Yes."

The man handed him a note.

Gabriel's face turned slightly pale, and he went hurriedly into the drawing-room.

Saville was there with Clara, Louisa, and their mother.

"I've just received a letter, which obliges me to go to Lorneby this evening," he said.

"I hope you will not be long," said Mrs. Mansfield with languid politeness.

"You will spoil the whist-party," cried Granville Saville.

"I fear I must spoil the whist-party," said Gabriel, laughing, "for I shall be detained an hour or so. However, I shall be back by ten."

"That will not be too late," returned Granby; "you know Clara and I are determined to have our revenge upon you and Louisa, so be back at ten."

"Yes," said Desney, "I shall be back positively at ten. My friend comes from abroad, and leaves by the quarter-past nine train to-night. It will take me only half-an-hour to walk home, if I come the short route by the Springhead. Good evening, then, all of you."

He took his leave gaily, wrapped himself up in his cloak, which he wore, even in summer, and started.

The twilight was bright, and the country looked solemnly still in the hush of the coming darkness.

"If Clara only knew how foolishly she was acting, she would feel contempt for herself," he murmured, as he walked along surveying his cane. "She must be mad to think I would betray her, when the very fact of betraying her would destroy my whole future. She will trust me in nothing. She believes I have some evil scheme in everything, whereas I only desire to hurry my marriage with Louisa, because I love her. Foolish, misguided girl—selfish too—for she ought to know that all the bitterness of my heart, all the coldness of my heart, every evil thought I have ever had in reference to her, have been caused by her own conduct to me. 'A man is what a woman makes him,' they say. She has nearly made me a fiend."

Soon after the departure of Gabriel Desney, Clara complained of a headache.

"My head is very bad," she said. "I will go to my room and lie down. Don't let me be disturbed,

mother, until Mr. Desney returns, as I will try to sleep."

She then went out of the room, closing the door carefully after her, and ascended towards her own chamber.

In doing so she had to pass that of Gabriel Desney. The door was ajar.

He had forgotten to put out his light, when he fetched his cloak, and the taper candle shed a dim unearthly light over the table amid a heap of disordered papers.

Clara glanced round her, saw that no one was observing her, and entered softly, closing the door noiselessly and turning the key.

The first paper which stared her in the face was her marriage-certificate—then there were packets of her letters neatly folded and tied with ribbon.

Some of them were torn, she found, when she opened them, and some blotched and discoloured with tears; and one, in which she had sworn eternal fidelity to him, was marked with a line of comment on the top.

Thus the inscription ran: "A memory of early days—an argument against love."

Gabriel Desney had brought forth these relics from their concealment with a feeling far different to that imputed to him by Clara Mansfield.

He had brought them forth for the purpose of destroying them, and with them a past which was a dread and a bitterness.

Clara imagined that she saw in them her own ruin.

She took them, therefore, gathered each separate fragment, and put them upon the smouldering fire.

A good flame shot up.

"With them my fear is lessened," she murmured; "now there is but one obstacle between me and the future, and that is Gabriel Desney."

She took out her watch.

It was a quarter past eight o'clock.

"I have little time," she said; "I must hasten."

So saying, she noiselessly opened the door, and, with her gliding, serpentine walk, crept up to her own room.

The man whose arrival had summoned Gabriel Desney to Lorneby, was a friend whom he had met for the first time abroad.

He had been a bosom companion of Gabriel, knew all his secrets, participated, as it were, in all his sorrows, and his arrival had for the moment somewhat perturbed the tutor.

What if he should come to Ellersby Grange?

What if he should recognize Clara, and speak of the story to Saville?

So he had, without hesitation, made the best of his way towards the Railway Hotel; and found his quondam friend enjoying a cigar in the best room.

They chatted of old times, made arrangements for meeting again in London, grew enthusiastic over youthful follies, and were surprised when the clock struck nine.

"I must be thinking of going!" cried Marston Grey, as he rose; "come down with me while I see after the baggage."

Marston Grey was a tall, finely-built fellow—a handsome fellow with a noble and frank cast of features.

He had a jovial voice, too, and there was something especially persuasive about it as he cried, when they had seen after the luggage, and stood at the door of the station which overlooked the dark country:

"You'd better come up to London with me, old boy. There's nothing here but dullness and darkness. Why, the very idea of your crossing that horrid black-looking country to reach home to-night sends a chill through me. Come up to my bright-looking house in town—have your own rooms and be jolly!"

Gabriel smiled.

"I thank you," he said, "but at present I am not my own master."

"What! you can't be in love again?"

"Perhaps so. But come, there is your train going; the whistle has sounded; I must see you safely in the carriage."

They walked together, arm-in-arm, along the platform.

"I don't half-like leaving you here," said Marston Grey; "however, there's no time to talk. I shall get my business in town done as soon as possible and I'll run down again."

He entered the carriage.

They shook hands again, the train moved on, and Gabriel Desney left the station and strolled along the road.

At the path across country he paused a moment, looked up at the sky, and then leaped over the stile.

The moon was on his right, and his shadow seemed to walk by his side.

Was it his disordered brain which made him fancy that the shadow had its double?

(To be continued.)

A GENERAL order from the Horse Guards has been received at Chatham, announcing that her Majesty has been pleased to approve a new description of sword-belt, with three rows of gold embroidery, for field-marshal, general officers, and generals on the staff, and a similar belt, with two rows of embroidery, for staff officers under the rank of general officers, in lieu of those now prescribed by regulation, which are found not sufficiently strong for service. The Duke of Cambridge directs that all general and staff officers on active employment shall furnish themselves with the new sword-belts, according to the pattern deposited at the Horse Guards, and general officers not actively employed will adopt the new pattern as they may require to replace those now in use.

SELF-MADE;

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

By Mrs. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "The Hidden Hand," "The Lost Heiress," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE JOURNEY.

Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape fire the view?
The fountains fall, the rivers flow,
The woody valleys warm and low,
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky!
The pleasant seat, the chapel tower,
The naked rock, the shady bower,
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each gave each a double charm,
As pearls upon a woman's arm.

Dyer.

ISHMAEL and his aged retainer rode on, down the elm-shaded avenue, and out upon the turnpike-road. There seemed to be a special fitness in the relations between these two. Ishmael, you are aware, was a very handsome, stately, and gracious young man. And the professor was the tallest, gravest, and most respectable of servants. Ah! their relative positions were changed since twelve years before, when they used to travel that same road on foot, as master and boy.

Many men in Ishmael's position would have shrunk from all that would have reminded them of the poverty from which they had sprung; and would have avoided, as much as possible, all persons who were familiar with their early struggles.

But Ishmael did not so. While pressing forward to the duties and distinctions of the future with burning aspiration and untiring energy, he held the places and persons of the past in most affectionate remembrance.

To a vain and haughty man in Ishmael's situation there could scarcely have occurred a more humiliating circumstance than the constant presence of the poor, old odd-jobber, whose "boy" he had once been.

But Ishmael was neither the one nor the other; he was intellectual and affectionate. His breadth of mind took in his past memories, his present position and his future prospects, and saw them all in perfect harmony, whilst his depth of heart found room for the humblest friends of his wretched infancy, as well as for the higher loves of his manhood's prime.

Ishmael was at ease with the old odd-job man, because from the depths of his soul he was intensely conscious of the innate majesty of man.

Ishmael had no more need of a servant than a coach has of a fifth wheel. He took the professor into his service for no other purpose than to take care of the poor old man and make him happy, never foreseeing how really useful and important this grey-haired retainer would eventually become to him. He was planning only the professor's happiness, not his own convenience. But he found both.

As they rode along, that pleasant September morning, he was pleasing himself with thinking how that intelligent old man, starved all his life for mental food, would delight himself amid the intellectual wealth of his new life.

They were approaching the turnstile at the cross-roads, memorable for the weary watchings of Lady Hunt-Monceaux.

As they reached the spot and took the road leading to Baymouth, Ishmael looked back to the professor, who, as he felt in duty bound to do, rode in the rear of his master, and as was natural, looked a little serious.

"Do you remember, professor, how often you and I have travelled afoot up and down this road, in the exercise of our useful calling of odd-jobbing? Your great shoulders bowed under an enormous load of pots, pans, kettles, umbrellas, and everything that required your surgical skill; and my little back bent beneath the basket of tools?" inquired Ishmael, by way of diverting him.

"Ah! do I not, sir! But why recall those days?

You have left them far behind, sir," said the professor, in grave consideration of his master's dignity.

"Because I like to recall them, professor! It quickens my gratitude to the Lord, for all his marvellous mercies, and it deepens my love for my friends, for their goodness to me then," said Ishmael fervently.

"The Lord knows I don't know who was good to you then! Of course, now, sir, there are multitudes of people who would be proud to be numbered among your friends. But then, of all the abandoned children that ever I saw, you were about the most friendless!" said the professor, with much feeling.

"You, for one, were good to me, professor! And I don't forget it."

"Ah! the Lord knows it was but little I could do!"

"What you did was vital to me, professor! My life was but a little flame, in danger of going out! You fed it with small chips and kept it alive."

"And it burns great logs now, and warms the world!" said the professor, looking proudly and fondly upon the young man before him.

"It shall at least warm and shelter your age, professor. And whatever of prosperity the Lord accords me, you shall share."

As he said these words, he turned an affectionate look on his retainer, and saw the tears running down the old man's cheeks.

"It was but a few poor crumbs I cast upon the waters, that all this bread should come back to me after many days!" he muttered in a broken voice.

"We were really very happy, professor, when we used to trudge the road together, plying our profession; but we are going to be much happier now, because our lives will be enlarged."

The professor smiled assent, and they rode on.

They passed through Baymouth, where the professor directed his master's attention to the new signs of the mechanics who had taken his custom from him.

"But it is a true saying, sir, that there never was one door closed but there was another opened. Many doors were closed against me at once; but just see what a broad, beautiful door you have opened to me, letting me into a glorious new life!"

"Life is what we make of it, professor! To you, who will appreciate and enjoy every good thing in it, no doubt your new life will be very happy," replied Ishmael.

And so conversing they passed through the town and entered the deep forest that lay along the shores of the river between Baymouth and Shelton.

They rode all the morning through the pleasant woods, and stopped an hour at noon to rest and refresh themselves and their horses; and then resumed their journey and rode all the afternoon, and arrived at Woodville just as the sun was setting.

As before, Reuben, Hannah, Sam, Sally, the children and the dog, all rushed out to welcome Ishmael.

Much astonished was Hannah, to see her old friend, the professor, and much delighted to hear that he was going to fill the place of major-domo to Ishmael. For Hannah shared the old woman's superstition, that the young man is never able to take care of himself; and notwithstanding all that had come and gone—notwithstanding that Ishmael had taken care of himself and her too, from the time he was eight years old, for years more, still she thought that he would be all the safer for having "an old head to look after him."

There was a plenty of news to tell, too.

And as soon as the bounteous supper that Reuben and Hannah always provided for their favoured guests was over, and they were all gathered around the bright little fire that the capricious autumn weather rendered desirable, the budget was opened.

Lord and Lady Vincent were to have an evening reception at Tanglewood.

And on the first of October they were to start for Scotland.

Lady Vincent was going to take three of the servants with her—Katy, Jim, and Sally.

Jim was to go as lady's footman; Sally as lady's maid; and old Katy in no particular capacity, but because she refused to be separated from the two beings she loved the most of all in the world.

She had nursed Miss Claudia, and she was bound to nurse Miss Claudia's children, she said.

Lady Vincent had decided to take her, and was rather glad to do it.

Lord Vincent, it was supposed, did not like the arrangement; but Lady Vincent, it was confidentially asserted, never deigned to consult his lordship, or pay the slightest attention to his prejudices. And so matters stood for the present.

All this was communicated to Ishmael by Reuben and Hannah, and in the midst of their talk, in walked Katy, one of the subjects of the conversation.

She was immediately welcomed, and provided with a seat in the chimney-corner. She was inflated with the subject of her expected jaunt, and glowing with

the importance of her anticipated office. She expatiated on the preparations in progress.

"But don't you feel sorry to leave your native home, Katy?" inquired Hannah.

"Who, me? No, indeed! I takes my native home along with me when I takes Miss Claudia and Jim and Sally! 'Tis home where'er my heart is! And my heart is 'long with the children! Besides which, I don't want to be stuck down in one place, like an old tree as can't be moved without killing it! I'm a living soul, I am, and I want to go and see some-thing' of the world!" said Katy, briskly.

Evidently Katy was a progressive spirit, and would not have hesitated to emigrate to any new colony where she could better herself or her children, and begin life afresh at fifty.

At last Katy got up to go, and bade them all a patronizing farewell.

Sally and Jim, who, as usual, was spending his evening with her, arose to accompany Katy, and Ishmael took his hat and walked on after them.

Very much embarrassed they were at this unusual honour, which they could in no wise understand, until at length, when they had gone some little way, Ishmael said:

"I have something to say to you three."

"Yes, sir," said Katy, speaking for the rest.

"Katy, you are acquainted with that psychological mystery called presentiment, for I have heard you speak of it," said Ishmael, smiling, half in doubt, half in derision of his present feelings.

"Ye-es, sir," answered Katy, hesitatingly; "I believes in presentiments; though what you mean by sigh-what's-it's-name, I don't know."

"Never mind, Katy, you believe in presentiments?"

"Indeed do I! and got good reason to, too! Why, the month before Mrs. Merlin, as was Miss Claudia's mother, died, I experienced the most astonishing—"

"Yes, I know. You told me all about that before, Katy."

"Why, so I did, to be sure, sir, when you were lying wounded at the house."

"Yes. Well, Katy, some such feeling as that of which you speak, vague but very strong, impels me to say what I am about to say to you all."

"Yes, sir. Listen!" said Katy, in a voice of such awful solemnity that Ishmael again smiled at what he was inclined to characterize as the absurdity of believing in presentiments.

"You three are going to Scotland in attendance upon Lady Vincent."

"Yes, sir. Listen!" again said Katy, keeping her eyes fixed upon Ishmael, and nudging her companions right and left with her elbows.

"You will be all of her friends, all of her native country, all of her past life that she will take with her."

"Yes, sir. Listen!" and another elbow nudge, right and left.

"She is going among strangers, possibly rivals and enemies."

"Yes, sir. Listen, now it's a comin'!"

"She may need all your devotion. Be vigilant, therefore. Watch over her, care for her, think for her, pray for her; let her honour and happiness be the one charge and object of your lives."

"Yes, sir. Listen; you hears, don't you?"

A sharp reminder, right and left, brought out the responses "yes" and "yes" from Jim and Sally.

"And when you are far away, you will remember all this that I have said to you; for, as I said before, I feel, deep in my spirit, that your lady will need your utmost devotion," said Ishmael, earnestly.

"You may count on me, for one, Mr. Ishmael, sir; not only to devote myself to my lady's service, but to keep the old woman and Sally in mind to go and do likewise," said Jim, with an air of earnest good faith that could not be doubted.

"That is right! I will take leave of you now. Good-bye. God bless you!"

And Ishmael shook hands with them all round, and left them, and walked back to the cottage.

The next day, being the Sabbath, he went with Hannah and Reuben and the professor to church. He had almost shrunk from this duty, in his dread of meeting Claudia there; but she was not present. Judge Merlin's pew was empty when they entered, and remained empty during the whole of the morning service.

When the benediction had been pronounced, and the congregation were going out, Ishmael was about to leave his pew, when he saw that the minister had come down from the pulpit and was advancing straight towards him to speak to him. He therefore stopped and waited for Mr. Ruthven's approach.

There was a shaking of hands, and mutual inquiries as to each other's health, and then Mr. Ruthven invited Ishmael to accompany him home and dine with him.

Ishmael thanked him and declined the invitation, saying that he was with friends.

Mr. Ruthven then smilingly shook hands with Ishmael, and they separated.

Very early on Monday morning, Ishmael and his grey-haired retainer prepared for their departure.

Ishmael left two commissions for Reuben. The first was to make his apologies and adieu to Judge Merlin. And the second was to send back the horse borrowed for the use of the professor, to Mr. Brudnell at Brudnell Hall. Both of which Reuben promised promptly to execute.

After an early breakfast, Ishmael and his venerable dependent took leave of Hannah, and the children.

Nothing could exceed the surprise and delight of the intellectual but childlike old man, who now for the first time in his life looked upon a large city. His enthusiasm at the sight was ecstatic.

"You shall go all through it, as soon as we get settled," said Ishmael.

"There is only one thing that I am doubtful about," said the professor.

"And what is that?"

"That I have not years enough left to live to see all the wonders of the world!"

"None of us—not the youngest of us have, professor. But you will live to see a great many. And by the time that you have seen everything that is to be found in London, I shall be ready to go to the continent; for I expect to see it, some time or other, professor, and you shall see it with me."

"Oh!" ejaculated the old odd-job man, who seemed to think that the millennium was not far off.

At that moment the cab drew up before Ishmael's lodgings, and the driver and the professor carried the luggage into the front hall. And when the cab was paid and dismissed, Ishmael conducted the professor to the inner office, where the two clerks that were in charge of it arose to welcome their principal.

When he had shaken hands with them, he led his retainer into the bedroom, and showed him a small vacant chamber adjoining that, and told him that the latter should be his—the professor's own sanctuary. Then he showed the old man the pleasant garden, all blooming now with late roses, chrysanthemums, and other autumn flowers, and told him that there he might walk or sit, and smoke his pipe, in pleasant weather. And finally he brought the professor back to the front office, where he found his hostesses, Miss Jenny and Miss Nelly Downey, waiting to welcome him. Nice, delicate, refined looking old maiden ladies: they were, tall, thin, and fair complexioned, with fine, grey hair, and cobweb lace caps, and pale grey dresses, and having pleasant smiles and soft voices.

After they had shaken hands with their lodger, they turned looks of inquiry upon the tall, grey-haired old man that stood behind him.

"This is a very old friend of mine; I have engaged him to take care of my rooms; his name is Morris, but upon account of his skill in many arts, he has received from the public the title of professor," said Ishmael, turning an affectionate look upon the old odd-job man.

"How do you do, Professor Morris? We are very glad to see you, I am sure; and we hope you will find yourself comfortable and also that you will be a comfort to Mr. Worth, who is a very estimable young gentleman, indeed," said Miss Jenny, speaking for herself and sister.

"I cannot fail to be both comfortable and happy under this honoured roof," said the professor, in a most reverential tone, laying his hand upon his heart and making a profound bow that would have done credit to the most accomplished courtier of the grave and stately old school.

"A nice, gentlemanly old person," said Miss Jenny, nodding her head to her sister. And Miss Nelly said, "Yes," and nodded her head also.

"If you can fit up the little chamber adjoining my bedroom for the professor, I will arrange with you for his board," said Ishmael, aside to Miss Jenny.

"Oh, certainly; it shall be done immediately," replied the old lady. And she left the room, followed by her sister, to give orders to that effect.

Before night the professor was comfortably installed in his neatly-furnished and well-warmed little room, and Ishmael's apartments were restored to order, and he himself in full carver going over the office business of the last two weeks with his clerks.

He found plenty of work cut out for him to do, and he resolved to be very busy to make up for his idleness during his holiday.

Ishmael did not really wish to tax his old servant with any labour at all. He wished his office to be as much of a sinecure as possible. And he continually urged the professor to go abroad and see the city sights, or to walk in the garden and enjoy his pipe, or rest himself in his own room, or visit his daughter.

The professor obediently did all this for a time; but as the days passed, Ishmael saw that the old man's greatest happiness consisted in staying with and serv-

ing his master; and so he at length permitted the professor to relieve the chamber-maid of her duties in his rooms, and take quiet possession and complete charge of them.

And never were rooms kept in more perfect order; but best of all, love taught the professor the mystic art of dusting without deranging papers and distracting their owner.

Ishmael's present position was certainly a very pleasant one. He not only found a real home in his boarding-house, and a faithful friend in his servant, but a pair of friends in his landladies. Every good heart brought in contact with Ishmael Worth was sure to love him. And these old ladies were no exception to the rule. They had no relatives to bestow their affections upon, and so, seeing every day more of their young lodger's character, they grew to love him with maternal ardour. It is not too much to say that they doated on him. And in private they nodded their heads at each other, and talked of its being time to make their wills, and spoke of young Mr. Worth as their heir and executor.

Ishmael, for his part, treated the old ladies with all the reverential tenderness that their age and womanhood had a right to expect from his youth and manhood. He never dreamed that the "sweet, small courties," which it was his happiness to bestow alike on rich and poor, had won for him such signal favour in the eyes of the old ladies. He knew and was happy to know that they loved him. That was all. He never dreamed of being their heir; he never even imagined that they had any property to bequeath. He devoted himself with conscientious zeal to his profession; and went on, as he deserved to go on, from success to success.

CHAPTER LXXX.

LADY VINCENT'S RECEPTION.

The folds of her wine-dark violet dress
Glow over the sofa fall, on fall,
As she sits in the light of her loveliness,
With a smile for each and for all.

Could we find out her heart through that velvet and lace,
Can it beat without rumpling her sumptuous dress?
She will show us her shoulder, her bosom, her face,
But what her heart's like, we must guess. O. M.

THE evening of Lady Vincent's reception arrived, and Judge Merlin's country house was filled.

All the county families of any importance were represented there—the rustic guests drawn, no doubt, by their regard for Judge Merlin and his daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Middleton and Beatrice came very early, encumbered with several handboxes; for their long ride made it necessary for them to defer their evening toilet until after their arrival.

They were received and conducted to their rooms by old Katy.

"Lady Vincent," she said, "has not yet left her dressing-room."

When their toilets were made, Mr. and Mrs. Middleton came to Beatrice's door to take her down to the drawing-room.

Very beautiful looked Beatrice in her floating, cloud-like dress of snow-white tulle, with white moss-roses resting on her rounded bosom and wreathing her golden ringlets; and all her beauty irradiated with the light of a happy love.

Her father smiled proudly, and her mother fondly on her, as she came out and joined them.

They found the drawing-rooms already well filled with guests.

Lord and Lady Vincent stood near the door to receive all comers. To them the Middletons first went.

Very handsome and majestic looked Claudia in her rich robe of royal purple velvet, with her raven-black hair crowned with a diadem of diamonds, and diamonds blazing on her neck and arms, and at her waist. Strangers looked upon her loveliness with unqualified delight. Her "beauty made them glad." But friends who saw the glittering surface and the alloy beneath it, admired and sighed. Her dark eyes were beaming with light, her oval cheeks were burning with crimson fire. Mrs. Middleton thought this was fever; but Beatrice knew it was French rouge.

Claudia received her friends with bright smiles and gay words. She complimented them on their good looks, and rallied them on their gravity. And then she let them lightly pass away to make room for new arrivals, who were approaching to pay their respects.

They passed through the crowd until they found Judge Merlin, to whose care Mr. Middleton consigned Beatrice, while he himself, with his wife on his arm, made a tour of all the rooms, including the supper-room.

The party, they saw, was going to be a successful one, notwithstanding the fact that the three great metropolitan ministers of fashion had nothing whatever to do with it.

Sam and Jim, with perfect liberty to do their worst, in the matters of garden-flowers and wax-lights, had

decorated and illuminated the rooms in rich profusion. The guests might have been in fairy groves and bowers, instead of drawing-rooms, for any glimpses of walls and ceilings they could get through green boughs and blooming flowers.

In the supper-room, old Katy and her attendant nymphs had laid a feast that might have vied in elegance with the best ever elaborated.

In the dancing-room, the local band of musicians drew from their fiddles, notes as ear-piercing and limb-lifting, if not as scientific and artistic, as anything ever executed by the greatest masters of instrumentation.

Lord Vincent, secretly cynical, sneered at all this; but openly courteous, made himself agreeable to all the prettiest of the country belles, who ever after had the proud boast of having quadrilled or waltzed with Lord Vincent.

The party did not break up until the morning; the reason of this was obvious—the company could not venture to return home in their carriages over those dangerous country roads until daylight.

It was, in fact, sunrise before the last guests departed, and the weary family were at liberty to go to bed and sleep. They had turned the night into day, and now it was absolutely necessary to turn day into night.

None of them awoke until three or four o'clock in the afternoon, when they took coffee in their chambers. And they did not re-assemble until the dinner hour at six o'clock.

The Middletons had not departed with the other guests. They joined the family at dinner. And after dinner, at the pressing invitation of Judge Merlin, they agreed to remain at Tanglewood for the few days that would intervene between the departure of Lord and Lady Vincent for Scotland. Only Beatrice, the next morning, drove over to the Beacon to give the servants these strict charges in regard to the girls and boys, and to bring little Lu back with her to Tanglewood.

All things being in readiness, it was on a bright Monday morning, the first of October, Lord and Lady Vincent, with their servants and baggage, departed from Tanglewood.

Judge Merlin, leaving his house to be shut up by the Middletons, accompanied them with the purpose of seeing them off.

It was quite an imposing procession that left Tanglewood that morning. There were two carriages and a van. In the first carriage rode Lord and Lady Vincent and Judge Merlin. In the second, my lord's valet and my lady's three servants. And in the van was piled an inconceivable amount of luggage.

This procession made quite a sensation, as it lumbered along the rough country roads. Every little cottage along the way turned out its girls and boys, who threw up their arms with a prolonged "Hooray!" as it passed, to the great disgust of Lord Vincent, and the transient amusement of the judge. As for Claudia, she sat back with her eyes closed, and cared for nothing.

After a ride of ten hours, our party had barely time to get their breakfast comfortably, before the hour for their departure arrived.

Lower and lower sank the heart of the widowed father as the moment approached that was to separate him from his only child. There were times when he so dreaded that moment as to wish for death instead. There were times when he felt that the wrench which should finally tear his daughter from him must certainly prove his death-blow. Yet, for her sake, he bore himself with composure and dignity. He would not let her see the anguish that was oppressing his breast.

He drew her arm within his own, keeping her hand pressed against his aching bosom, and so he led her up the gangway on board the steamer, Lord Vincent and their retinue following.

On deck a pleasant seat was found for her, and he sat down beside her, keeping her arm within his, and her hand pressed as a balm to his bleeding heart.

There he sat, speaking but little, while active preparations were made for starting. It looked to him like preparations for an execution.

Lord Vincent walked up and down the deck, occasionally stopping to exchange a word with Claudia, or the judge.

At length the signal was given.

And the order was shouted forth:

"All hands ashore!"

The moment of life and death had come! The judge started up; and strained his daughter to his breast. He gasped:

"God bless you, my dear! Write as soon as you land!"

He wrung the hand of Lord Vincent. "Be good to—"

He stood alone on the quay, gazing at the receding ship, and at his daughter, who was leaning over the bulwarks, waving her handkerchief. Swiftly, swiftly,

steamed the ship from his strained sight. First his daughter's face faded from his aching vision, but still he could see the outline of her frail form. All his strength forsook him; his well-strung nerves suddenly relaxed; his limbs gave way beneath him, and he must have fallen but for the strong arms that suddenly clasped him, and the warm bosom that firmly supported him.

Turning up his languid, fainting eyes, he saw: "Ishmael!"

Yes, it was Ishmael, who with a son's devotion was standing there, and sustaining Claudia's forsaken father in the hour of his utter weakness and utmost need.

At first the judge looked at him in surprise and incredulity, which soon, however, gave way before recognition and affection, and as he rested on that true breast, and met those beautiful eyes bent on him in deepest sympathy.

"Oh, Ishmael, Ishmael, is it you—is it indeed you? You here at need? Oh, my son, my son, would to the Lord that you were indeed my son! It is a grief and a folly that you are not!" he exclaimed with emotion.

What could Ishmael reply to these words? Nothing! He could only tenderly support the old man, and turn to a grey-haired servant that waited behind him, and say:

"Professor, go call a carriage, quickly!"

And the professor started on his errand, with all the crippled alacrity of age and zeal.

"Oh, Ishmael, she has gone, she has gone! My daughter has left me!" he groaned, grasping the hand of his young supporter.

"I know it, sir, I know it! But this hour of parting is the bitterest of all! The heart feels the wrench of separation keenly now!"

"Oh, yes! yes!"

"But every coming hour will bring relief. You will cease to look back to the bitter parting, and you will look forward to the happy meeting! And that meeting may be as soon as you please, sir, you know. There is nothing to prevent or even delay your visit to Lady Vincent as soon as she gets settled."

"That is true! that is very true! Ah! I ought not to have given way so, and I should not have done it, only I was quite alone, when they sailed. There was no one with me to suggest these comforting thoughts, and I was too much prostrated by the wrench of parting, to remember them of myself! Oh, Ishmael! what providence was it that sent you to my side in this extremity?" inquired the judge, curiously mingling with his interest in the question.

"I came here," said Ishmael, frankly, "with no other purpose than to be with you in your hour of trial. I knew that you would require the presence of some friend!"

"Ah, Ishmael! it was just like you to drop all your business and come here uncalled, with the sole object of sustaining an old friend in the hour of his weakness! So that does not surprise me! But how did you hit the time so well?"

"I knew from Beatrice's last letter, dated from Tanglewood, the day that Lord Vincent had positively determined to depart. And, as Beatrice expressed great anxiety because you would be left quite alone after the trial of parting with Claudia, I resolved to come and be present myself."

"And you have taken all this thought and trouble for me? Oh, Ishmael! Ishmael! what a sorrow and shame it is that you are not my son!"

"I am your son in reverence, and love, and service, sir; and if I am not in any other way, it is because the Lord has willed otherwise," said Ishmael, very gravely.

"Did you see Claudia?" inquired the judge.

"I did not see Lady Vincent."

In a few more minutes Jim Morris came up with a carriage, and the judge, somewhat recovered now, was assisted into it.

"You are coming, too, Ishmael, are you not?" said the old man, looking anxiously out of the window.

"Of course I am, sir; for, with your permission, I will not leave you yet," replied the young man, preparing to spring into the carriage. But suddenly pausing, with his hand on the door he inquired:

"Where shall I order the man to drive?"

The judge named an hotel, which happened to be the very one at which Ishmael was stopping; and so the young man gave the order and entered the carriage.

The professor climbed up to a seat beside the man. When the carriage stopped at the hotel, Ishmael paid off the man, and gave his arm to the judge, and assisted him into the house.

"Ishmael," he said, as soon as they had reached a sitting-room, "have you no other business than to look after me?"

"None whatever. I am entirely at your service."

"Then we— But stop! Are you quite ready to return to London at any time?"

"Quite ready to go at a moment's warning if required."

"Then I think we had better take the early train to-morrow morning, for you ought not to be absent from your office, especially during court term, and even I shall be better at home. We shall need to-day and to-night for rest, but we will start to-morrow. What do you think?"

"I think that is the best plan."

As it was now about one o'clock, the judge ordered luncheon. And when they had partaken of it, and the judge had drunk several glasses of rich old port, he said:

"Ishmael, I did not get a wink of sleep last night, and this wine has made me drowsy. I think I will go to my chamber and lie down."

Ishmael gave the judge his arm, and assisted him to his bedroom, and saw him lie down, and waited until he knew him to be in a deep, refreshing sleep; and then he closed the blinds, and darkened the room, and left him to repose.

In the hall he spoke to one of the waiters, and placing something in his hand, requested him to go up and remain near the judge's chamber-door until he should awake.

Then Ishmael sought the professor out, and said to him:

"Professor, now that the judge has lain down, let us make use of the little time we have, to see as much as we can of the town."

Jim Morris eagerly jumped at the proposition.

Ishmael sent for a carriage, and they started; the professor this time riding inside with Ishmael, as he always did when they were alone.

They spent the whole afternoon in sight-seeing, and returned at sunset.

The judge had not awoken, nor did he awake until roused by the ear-stunning bell that warned all the guests to prepare for dinner.

He opened his eyes, and stared around in bewilderment for a few seconds, and then seeing Ishmael, remembered everything.

"Ah, my boy! now it is all come back, to me, afresh, and I have got it all to meet over again! I had been dreaming that I was at Tanglewood with my child, and she was neither married nor going to be. Now I have lost her anew!" he said, with a deep sigh.

"I know it, sir! but with every sleep and every awakening this impression will be fainter and fainter. You will soon be cheerful and happy again, in the anticipation of going to see her."

The judge rose to dress for dinner.

After dinner Ishmael persuaded him not to stay in, but to go out with him to hear a celebrated traveller and eloquent lecturer on the manners and customs of the Laplanders. The professor also had leave to go. And the judge and Ishmael were well entertained and interested, and the professor was instructed and delighted. Evidently the old odd-job man, judging from his past and present experience, thought

That now the kingdom must be coming,

And the years of jubilee.

They returned, and then retired to bed.

Ishmael took the responsibility of writing to Mr. Middleton, advising him to come up with the carriage in order to bear the judge company in his journey home.

The last day of the week the carriage arrived with Mr. Middleton inside and Sam on the box. And on Monday morning the judge, in better spirits than any one could have expected him to be, took an affectionate leave of Ishmael, and, with Mr. Middleton for company, set out for Tanglewood, where in due time they arrived safely.

(To be continued.)

THE NORFOLK GIANT.—Robert Hales, known as the Norfolk giant, died at great Yarmouth on the 22nd ult. Hales was born at West Somerton, a village a few miles from Yarmouth, in 1820, and was therefore only 43 years of age. He came of a family remarkable for their great stature, his father, a farmer, being 6 feet 6 inches in height, and his mother 6 feet. An ancestor of his mother's was said to have been that famous warder of bluff King Hal, who stood 8 feet 4 inches in height. Of such Patagonian parents the progeny were worthy: the boys were "sons of Anak," averaging 6 feet 5 inches each, and the girls, of Amazonian development, averaging 6 feet 3½ inches each. Robert was the flower of the flock, and stood 7 feet 6 inches, weighing 452 lbs. One of his sisters, with whom he exhibited some years ago, was 7 feet 2 inches, but she died in 1842, being then only 20 years of age. Hales was stout in proportion to his height, though somewhat clumsily put together. When in his prime he was 64 inches round the chest, 62 round the waist, 36 across the shoulders, and 21 round the calf of the leg. During his career he visited several continental capitals, and was presented to

Louis Philippe while king of the French. He was introduced to the Americans under the auspices of Barnum, and "drew" immensely, 28,000 persons having flocked to see him in ten days. On his return to this country he had the honour of being presented at Court, when her Majesty gave him a gold watch and chain, of which he was particularly proud, and wore to the day of his death. During last summer he came to Yarmouth for the benefit of his health, which had been very much impaired by the close confinement of the caravans in which he exhibited. He seemed to rally under the genial summer weather, but as autumn wore on he gradually declined, and died on the morning of the 22nd ult., the disease which proved fatal to him being consumption.

UNDER THE GREAT ELM-TREE.

BY DALTON STONE.

'Tis pleasant in the merry June,

When the woodland winds blow soft,

To lie and list to the cooing tune

That the stock-doves utter aloft.

To lie and list to the sylvan sound,

That soars up from the cowslip lea;

And quietly watch the levret's bound

From under the great elm-tree.

Here I lie while a sweet scent comes

From the hay in the new-mown meads;

And hark! the golden wasp that hums

Round the gaudy flowering weeds.

While the wavy shadows that pass,

Like the billows over the sea,

I watch sway over the grass,

From under the great elm-tree.

Here I lie through this afternoon,

Till the sun sinks behind the hill,

I'll wait till the argent harvest-moon

Splash with silver spray each rill,

And here I'll lie in the cool shade,

While my heart throbs wild with glee;

For I hear the steps of mine own true maid,

Coming under the great elm-tree.

THE THREE ROSES.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ARREST.

Loa: He! He never did it, sir: I swear to Heaven he never did it.

Officer: Some one did! And when one man's murdered, it stands to reason another must be hanged.

Haimonde.

"But this is horrible! Good Heaven! My brother assassinated! His faithful servant Sam arrested for murder. In the name of Heaven, woman, stop your raving, and give me a more intelligible account of what has happened! Margaret, my dear, go and order the horses to be put to the carriage immediately. Lock Janet's door on the outside, and take away the key, so that no indiscreet servant may overwhelm her or my mother with this news. Go at once, my dear; and now, Betty, tell me, how did this occur?" inquired Mrs. Redclyffe, as, pale with horror, she heard the news of her brother's state from old Betty, early on the morning succeeding the scene at the Limes, described in the last chapter.

The poor old soul began sobbing, gasping, wringing her hands, and swaying her body to and fro. Alice, full of pity, brought her some ether in a glass, and forced her to swallow it. This settled her nerves and composed her mind, so that she drew a long breath, and remained silent. The mother and daughter gravely awaited her explanation—so gravely, that the poor woman, looking at them, said:

"You are not angry with me, are you?" in a low, slow tone, of such piteous deprecation, that Mrs. Redclyffe answered gently:

"Oh, no; we are not angry with you; how should we be? We feel very sorry for you, only we would like you to tell us, as we go along, what really has happened."

"The carriage is ready, madam," said a servant, entering at the same moment.

"Come, Betty! you must return in the carriage with me."

"Oh, no! ma'am, indeed you must excuse me. I am going down to the gaol to persuade Sam to confess, and then to bail him out."

"Bail him out!"

"Yes; I am going to give them my body instead of his."

Mrs. Redclyffe explained, while she dressed, that it was impossible for her to bail her husband out of gaol in the way proposed.

Poor old Betty opened wide her eyes at this, and then gave herself up to sobbing and groaning.

Mrs. Redclyffe stooped down and said, gently:

"Betty, do not cry. I will bail him out—if it be possible. Don't cry. Get up, and come with me."

Her kind words, and a glass or two of water, helped the poor old creature upon her feet, and she entered the carriage.

"Take care of your cousin, Alice. If necessary, I will send the carriage back for both of you, and in that case, you will know how to bring her without alarming her."

It was not until they had ridden some way, that Mrs. Redclyffe could draw from Betty anything like a connected statement of what had befallen. At last, however, she said:

"Why, last night, about nine o'clock, Sam goes to the cupboard and takes a big pull at the whiskey bottle—indeed he did, honey!—and he draws on his greatcoat. 'Sam! where are you going this time of night?' said I. He, instead of satisfying his lawful companion, buttons up his coat to his chin. So I tried to persuade him, and he said, 'Women ought not to know everything.'"

"Go on."

"Well, you see, he went without another word, and I go to bed, but I didn't sleep. So I laid, and I tossed, and I tumbled, and I heard the clock strike ten, eleven, twelve! then I hear master's bell ring—'Ting-a-ling—a-ling—a-ling—a-ling-ting-ting!—tang a-lang—a-lang—a-lang—tang—tang!—'—then I jumped out of bed, ran to the house, as fast as ever my poor old legs could go; and when I got there, I went to old master's door, and tried to open it, but it was locked; we listened, it was still as death in there, and then we rapped, and the awfullest groans answered us, and short, quick screams, then we burst the door open, and as we did, something rushed out past of us, and we couldn't see what it was in the dark, except the murky fire-light, and by it we saw old master, laying with the side of his head across the fender, which was knocked over underneath him, just as if he had fell and struck it! and we see the candlestick on the floor, and the candle out, just as if some one had thrown it down on purpose; and we saw a little, bright point shining on the rug. Well, we lighted the candle, and we lifted master up, and underneath him was a little pool of blood!"

"Good Heaven!"

"Yes, and now comes the worst of it! while we were trying to bring master to, the housekeeper and some of the men servants went searching the room, and oh! that ever I should live to see and tell it! there they found Sam hiding behind a curtain, and they pulled him out right afore my face, and his eyes were starting and his teeth chattering, and his knees knocking together, and the poor old fool couldn't give a single bit of account of himself, indeed he couldn't. The housekeeper sent off two men, one after a surgeon, another after Captain Houghton, he being the nearest neighbour and magistrate. All this time, two or three of us had laid master down on the sofa, and were trying to bring him to life. One of the men wanted to bleed him with a penknife, but I told him how I thought he had lost blood enough already, and another wanted to pour whiskey down his throat."

"But Jessie Appleton? Where was she all this time?"

"Well, soon as she had time to look about her, the housekeeper sent one of the girls to wake up Miss Appleton, and presently she ran screeching back into the room, white as a ghost. We thought she must be weltering in her blood too, but the consequence was that Miss Jessie, herself, rushed in—her eyes sparkling, her arms flying over her head, her hair streaming behind, and scarce no clothes on her back—shrieking 'I killed him! He deserved it! I'd do it again.'"

"Merciful Heaven!"

"Then there was another one we had to throw down by main force and bind—all the time she was screaming and struggling; and also frequently shrieking, 'I did it, I did it!' It was clear the poor girl was raving distracted. But as soon as that poor old Sam heard the poor girl accuse herself, he said, 'Yes, that was the truth, because he saw her do it!'"

"You seem to be so sure that your husband did this. I think that some weight should be attached to Jessie's self-accusation."

"I wish it had been she, before ever it had been my poor old man! But there wasn't no chance of it's being anybody else but he, 'cause you see wasn't the door busted open, wasn't it fastened on the inside, and wasn't old Sam found hiding in the room?"

"True, most true!"

"And didn't the housekeeper say she was waked up in the night by hearing old master and old Sam in loud altercation? Ah! I don't love that young girl a bit! I don't believe any good of her. But she didn't do that."

"Did the doctor get there?"

"Yes, and Captain Houghton too. And he had old Sam locked up till this morning, and the surgeon had old master took off to his room, and Miss Jessie to hers. Oh, how I wish it had been she!"

"What opinion did the doctor give of his patients?"
 "He said how old master's was a case of confusion of the brain."

"That was last night. How are they this morning?"

"Precisely the same. Master laying like dead, and Miss Jessie raving distracted."

I said the bridle-path between Oak Lodge and the Limes was very beautiful, upon the margin of the river, through the deep forests, and over rocks. The carriage-road was a different affair—up and down steep hills all the way; now the coach would be labouring slowly and heavily up the steep hill, and now rushing, tumbling, and thundering down with a tumultuous rapidity that threatened every instant to pitch the back of the carriage over the heads of the horses. Betty held on to the side-loops desperately with both hands, and at last called out to the driver, "I say, Bob, drive careful! Drive careful, because, you see, if you goes and breaks my neck, I can't be hanged in place of poor old Sam. Drive careful down this dreadful hill!"

The last word jumped out with a heavy rebounding jolt, that, however, brought them safely to the bottom of the hill, and in full sight of the Limes. In ten more minutes, Mrs. Redclyffe had arrived, alighted, and, followed by Betty, entered the house.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE TRIAL.

Let the prisoner be placed at the bar.

Legal Form of Invitation.

I'll see, before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
 And on the proof there is no more but this—
 Away at once with love and jealousy.

Shakespeare.

THERE WAS quite a crowd of people assembled at the Limes. There is nothing, neither wedding, christening, nor funeral, for bringing people together like a catastrophe, particularly if there is a mystery in it. On seeing the state of her brother, Mrs. Redclyffe had thought proper to send first for Alice, her mother, and Janet. These three ladies arrived, accompanied by Maggy, who was always ready to offer her assistance in distress. Next she sent for Captain Houghton, in his capacity of magistrate, and lastly, for Mr. Boileau, to be on the spot, "in case anything should happen."

Roland's wounds had been dressed, and he lay upon his bed, flat on his back, perfectly motionless, his eyes half-open, his lips blue, his skin of that grey paleness which is usually the forerunner of death. Janet, weak and pale, sat by her father's bed, her "numbed" affections slowly reviving at the piteous sight.

Jessie, in the opposite wing of the building, lay tossing and tumbling, or violently struggling, and filling the air with screams. Ruth Downes and her father, who had come over at the first news of the calamity, had as much as they could do to hold her down during one of her paroxysms of frenzy. She was possessed with the idea that she had murdered Roland Mildred, and was about to be led to the scaffold for the crime; all her shrieks and violent struggles were to escape the visionary executioner. There could be no greater trial to the good little landlord and his tender-hearted daughter, than to witness this agony. Poor little John Downes she always took for the executioner, and would shriek horribly when he approached to hold her, to prevent her throwing herself upon the floor, or dashing her head against the wall. This hurt his feelings more than anything.

"Me a hangman! Me—as always goes out of sight and hearing whenever they kill a chicken for dinner! Do I look like a Jack Ketch, I asks any candid soul?" sitting down, puffing and blowing and panting, and wiping his round face with his speckled yellow handkerchief. "Ruth, do I look cruel?"

"No, indeed, father. You look just like what you are, the very best man in the world, I don't care who the others may be. Don't mind what she says, father; she is raving mad."

These conversations would occur after Jessie, with her violent struggles and shrieks, had quite worn out her strength, and lay in a state of temporary quietude from exhaustion. It was singular that no one noticed her raving or attached any suspicion to her from the fact of her self-accusation. What motive, in fact, could she be supposed to have for deadly enmity to Roland Mildred. On the contrary, every one supposed them to be on terms of the most perfect confidence and cordiality. There was one, indeed, who grew pale and stern, when he heard of Jessie's "maniac fancies"—Captain Houghton. He had, it is true, upon the strength of the strong, and but, for one fact known only to himself, overwhelming circumstantial evidence, incarcerated poor old Sam, but he dared not trust his own judgment to commit him for trial; he preferred being assisted by the cool heads and hearts of his brother magistrates. Sam had been confined—not in

gaol, yet, as poor Betty and his fellow-servants, for his better security, had been led to suppose—but in a distant chamber in the house, there to await the arrival of the other magistrates.

They came about noon.

Presently poor old Sam was led, or rather dragged in, half-dead with terror, and between two constables. He was the perfect ideal of abject guilt. His looks would have been evidence enough to any jury to bring in a verdict of guilty. Yes, his face then would have hanged him. He was followed by old Betty, weeping bitterly. Sam was placed before his judges, and then his wife threw herself on his neck, weeping and hugging, and hugging and weeping, while between sobs and gasps she exhorted him to tell the truth and confess.

"If," wept the old man, with his head dropped upon his hands, "if anything could make this here bitter hour, when they accuses me of killing my own master, as I loved—any bitterer—it would be to hear my old woman think so wicked of me."

"Sam, if my testament hangs you, I can't help it, my poor, dear, old darling. I am obliged to tell the truth."

And, in fact, her testimony bore very hard upon the prisoner, to wit, his taking the deep draught of whiskey, going out late at night, refusing to tell her where, her next seeing him, when at the alarm the door of her master's chamber was broken open, and the master was discovered prostrate and bleeding, and the man dragged, half-dead with terror, from behind the window-curtain. Through all sorts of cross-questioning, Betty stuck to this story. At last she sat down, weeping, sobbing, and gasping hysterically. The housekeeper was next called, sworn, and deposed that between ten and eleven o'clock she had been awakened from her sleep by hearing her master in loud abuse of his man Sam; that she distinguished his voice in reply many times, but could not make out what was said. She said there followed a silence, during which she slept; that at last she was again awakened by loud voices in the same room. She heard her master's voice in a very high key, and then a sudden fall, a violent bell-ringing, and then silence; when the door was burst open, Roland Mildred was found, wounded and senseless, and old Sam hid behind the curtain. Several of the house servants were called, and all corroborated the testimony of the housekeeper in every particular. Betty "thought" some one rushed out as they all rushed in, but could not take it upon her conscience to swear to it. As none of the other witnesses knew anything of the occurrence it went for nothing. So Sam was committed to gaol to await his trial for assault, with intent to kill his master.

CHAPTER XXXVII

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

How little do they see what is, who frame
 Their hasty judgment upon that which seems.

Southey.

HAD Roland Mildred died in his insensibility, it is certain that old Sam would have been hanged upon strong circumstantial evidence. No sooner, also, had the prison door clanged to upon the poor old soul, than he nearly gave himself up for lost, and began assiduously to prepare for death; if shuddering, shivering, compressing his throat with his fingers to realize how painful the strangulation might be, and gasping out frightened ejaculations to Heaven for mercy, could be called preparation. When the jailor, who was also turnkey, brought him supper, he fell down on his knees, and clasping his hands, with tears in his eyes, he besought him to let him out—only to let him out—he had a hundred pounds, he had been saving them all his life long, master jailor should have it all if he would only let him out—out! it was so horrible to be shut up there even all night, even if nothing worse came of it. The jailor was sorry for the poor old soul; tried to comfort him, but told him it was impossible to grant his request. Old Sam tossed and tumbled on his straw all night, groaning: "This here comes of caves-dropping!" Near morning he formed a resolution, and when the turnkey brought him his breakfast, he expressed it in these words: "Master, I wants you, if you please, sir, to send for Captain Houghton."

A messenger was despatched to Fairseat; and soon returned, accompanied by the captain. He entered the cell, and found the poor old prisoner sitting down on the straw, with a silk handkerchief thrown over his head, and his face bowed upon his hands. He leaned with his back to the wall of the poor cell that did not boast a single seat, folded his arms, and, after gazing a moment at the bowed form before him with a ray of selfish hope in his face, he said:

"Well, old man, you sent for me—what do you want?"

"To confess."

Now the countenance of Captain Houghton positively brightened.

"To confess, what? You actually did—"

"Yes, I did, master."

"You poor miserable old creature. What tempted you to commit such a crime?"

"It was all along of caves-droppin', indeed it was, master. But I never thought how it would come to this here."

"The wages of sin is death."

"True, sir."

"Old man, I wished to hear your confession for my own private satisfaction, and for the exculpation of an innocent person, who—but no matter."

"Yes, sir, I knows it; but you see, master, unless I criminate myself, you'll keep on thinkin' as it was me sticked the little poinard in old master."

"In the name of Heaven, old man, what do you mean?" exclaimed the captain, growing again suddenly alarmed.

"I mean that it was Miss Jessie, sir; I saw her do it."

"Tell me all about this," commanded Captain Houghton, with frowning brow, set teeth, and closely folded arms.

"Why, you see, old master suspected how you and Miss Jessie were on very friendly terms, so he set me to watch her. Beg your pardon, but he commanded me, sir, and I were bound to obey; so I followed her to your house, night afore last, and when I saw her enter I went back according to orders, and he desired me never to say a word to any one about it. Well, while I was going slowly out, I hear master leave his room, and lay in wait for that young lady. Well, master, now comes the sin and the shame; so I went in the master's room and hid behind the window-curtains, because I wanted so bad to hear what he was going to say to her. Well, presently he comes pullin' her in by the hand."

The captain grew black in the face.

"Then he began to scold her—she to defend herself. Then he accused her for going to see a gentleman in his own house. Then she boasted of going to be married to you, sir."

Houghton made a movement expressive of disgust and impatience.

"Then he swore she shouldn't have you, sir. Then she laughed scornfully and said he couldn't prevent it. Then he told her how he'd tell you how she had been—I couldn't exactly hear what—but somethin' dreadful, for Miss Jessie screamed right out, and said, 'No, no, no! he would never do that.' And he swore by all as was good and great and sacred, how he would, and how then, sir, you would never look at her, but spurn her. Then Miss Jessie fell into a passion, and high words rose, and master caught her up in his arms, and began to kiss her, as he said he had done a thousand times afore—and presently I heard her speak deep and threatening-like; and then I peeped out, and saw somethin' gleam and disappear, and a scream, a fall, and then the room turned all round with me, and I never know anything till I found the room full of people, and me, tied hand and foot, on the floor, and Miss Jessie struggling in the hands of four women trying to hold her—raving, her eyes wild, her arms flying over her head, her hair streaming, and screaming how she did it herself; and then I remembered where I was, and all about it; and told them how it was she, because I saw her do it; and they told me to hush and not put my crime upon the poor mad girl. Even my old woman—"(here Sam ground his knuckles into his eyes) "yes, even my old woman believed me guilty. There, that was what I had to confess, and it is the truth. Now, sir, if you'll only give me a chance to speak to my poor woman, and take some of the load off her poor distressed mind, I will be so much obliged to you, sir."

It is impossible to describe the expression of Captain Houghton's countenance and attitude during this recital. His face expressed the bitter sorrow of one who discovered the woman he loved to be worthless; the bitter self-reproach of one who found himself out to be grossly duped—shame, disgust, rage, determination—all suppressed, but intense. At last he spoke.

"Samuel?"

"Sir."

"Speak nothing of this to any one until I come to you again."

"Not to my old woman, sir?"

"Yes. I will send her here; you may clear yourself with her; but in that case detain her here until I come."

"Yes, sir."

And he left the prison. Now, this story of Sam's corresponded so well with his well-known character of caves-dropper and agreed so well with other circumstances in connection, that the captain could have no doubt of its truth. Indeed, frequently before this, and during the absence of Jessie, he had been struck with the most painful suspicion, which, in her presence and under the miraculous fascinations of her manner, had entirely disappeared, and for which he mentally and severely reproached himself, seeking to make

amends to her for his silent doubts by throwing into his manner the gravest devotion.

Reader, have you never been tormented by such a state of affairs? Among all your acquaintances are there none whom you, in your cool and sober moments of solitude and reflection, know to be at heart selfish and calculating; yet whose fascinations of manner will compel you to abjure your instincts, and even fill you with remorse for ever having cherished an evil thought of them? Do you remember the anecdote told of Sheridan and one of his creditors, whom he had victimized a hundred times, and who, going to him full of fury to collect his debts or throw the debtor into prison, came away not only without fulfilling his purpose but actually a hundred pounds poorer than he went, Sheridan having magnetized an additional hundred out of his pocket by way of a loan.

And then there was Samson and Delilah. One would think that after the siren had tricked him twice—had twice falsely and traitorously sought to deliver him bound into the hands of his enemies, failed and been discovered—that Samson would have been wise and not permitted the Circe to magnetize his vital secret from his bosom; but you read that he would not or could not resist her fascinations; and, in spite of his bitter experience of her first treachery, and her palpable inflexibility of purpose to betray him, he trusts her again and is finally ruined.

There is no doubt on earth that had Jessie been once more present, with that melodious voice and those alluring eyes once more under her sane control, she would have wiled her victim to believe just what she pleased; but self-cheated with her own duplicity, and self-stung to madness by her own fierce passions, the girl now raved in high delirium, or lay in fits of complete prostration and insensibility. There was a change passing over her illness now. Every fit of frenzy was less violent, and every relapse into insensibility was more complete; and in the latter state now her features began to wear the pined expression, and her complexion the greyness of approaching dissolution.

True to his promise, Captain Houghton sent old Betty to the prison. This was the first opportunity the jealous surveillance of the officers had permitted the old couple to talk together. Now, as she entered, she threw herself upon the neck of her husband, and, "lifting up her voice," wept aloud, exhorting him between her sobs and gasps to "confess."

"I have," said the old man, and went on to explain to her the simple circumstances that had led to his being suspected.

Tears expressed all Betty's emotions. If she were afflicted, she wept; if she were highly amused, she laughed till she wept; and now her tears came in floods to express the joy she felt as she clasped and kissed her lifelong friend again and again, sobbing and laughing in her foolish fondness.

While they were yet speaking, the turnkey entered and told Sam that he was free to leave the prison, for an order had come for his being set at liberty.

They hurried joyously away, reached the Limes, where their fellow-servants received them with loud demonstrations of joy, at the outer farm gate; then, as they approached the house, they became silent, and whispered to Sam and Betty that death was in the house. Old Sam thought it was his master, and grew very ashy in the face. He entered the house with noiseless steps. His companions dispersed. He met Captain Houghton, looking very grave and sorrowful. He bowed to him, and begged to know if he might see his old master. Captain Houghton assented, and the old man passed slowly and reverentially up-stairs. He tapped at the door, which was opened by Maggy Upham, who silently admitted him. The room was in semi-darkness, but, lying on the bed, he recognized his master, pale and prostrate, but certainly not dying—he could see that, even in this subdued light. Mr. Burleigh sat by the head of the bed. The old man approached cautiously, and stood silently by the bedside. It seemed that he had been sent for, or expected, for his master feebly extended his hand to him, and faintly said:

"Poor fellow!" and dropped his head and voice, exhausted. After a few minutes looking at him, he said, very faintly: "They—would have hanged you—for eaves-dropping. I told you how it would end." And after another interval, he motioned for a restorative, which Maggy put to his lips. When he had drunk this off, he motioned to the minister and Maggy to leave him alone with his servant. When they had left the room, he turned to Sam, and said, in a stronger voice:

"So, Sam, if I had died in a stupor, you'd have been executed."

"Yes, sir, I know it; indeed I do."

"I sent for you to say, that on pain of my severest displeasure, you are not to mention to any soul the scene that you witnessed."

"No, sir; I won't, sir; indeed, sir, I won't."

"Have you spoken of it to any one?"

"No, sir; to no one sir, except it were the captain, and my old woman, sir."

"Houghton! Yes, it was as well that he knew of it; and Betty—go and enjoin her to silence, for if I ever hear of this subject again, from any quarter, I shall know it came from one of you, in which case—come, I do not like to threaten; but you know me."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, go."

The old man bowed and left the room. As he glided along the darkened and silent passage, a low, deep, prolonged wail rose and swelled upon the ear.

"What was that?" A second time it arose upon the air, swelling in a volume of sound and sorrow, and died away in quivering anguish. "What was that?" again cried the old man.

"Hush, it is Jessie; she is dying," said Maggy, as she emerged from a side-door, which, as it opened, gave a glimpse of a darkened chamber, a canopied bed, and emerging from the deep shadows of the picture—the shadows of surrounding curtains and dark-draped figures—gleamed a wild and maniac face, with streaming hair, and long, thin, pale arms thrown aloft, like streaks of light among black clouds. She closed the door instantly on this horrible picture. Margaret approached him, and, drawing him down the passage, said:

"Sam, she is dying—dying horribly—going as no soul should go into the presence of the Creator. Mr. Burleigh can do nothing with her. Even if a gleam of reason returns, she laughs horribly in his face, and tells him that she will hear him when they both renew their acquaintance in —. Oh, you know the place she said. It is horrible. Sam, you must saddle the fastest horse in the stable and go to St. Michael's, for Monsieur de Lorraine. He can still the fiercest tempest I ever saw arise in a sinful human breast; perhaps he can bring quiet to this stormy soul."

(To be continued.)

THE GAMBLER'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

It was a still winter night. The snowflakes were settling down fast and silently on the pavements of one of our cities. In one of the chambers of a princely mansion, whose thick-drawn curtains shrouded its lights from the quiet street, one of those scenes was going on which are so plentiful and sorrowful in life. A young girl, in the first flower of her youth, arrayed in a rich ball-dress, stood uneasily listening to her mother's counsel as she waited for the carriage which was to take her to a scene of festivity. There were lines upon the brow of the elder lady, traces of care, which seemed hardly to belong to middle age and to an assured position of wealth and honour. The raven tresses, too, were thickly silvered as they lay coiled up in glossy folds under her tasteful cap.

"My love," persisted Mrs. Bernard, "you know your father would not act without cause in such a matter. He has opportunities of learning the young man's character which neither you nor I possess."

"Mr. Rathlan is not rich," said Amy, a momentary flush lighting up her face; "he has no millionaire uncle, like Colonel Devereux—that is his fault."

Her mother sighed.

"My dear, your father would never allow you to marry a poor man. But this, in this instance, is not the only obstacle; Mr. Rathlan is dissipated."

"I do not believe it," said Amy, haughtily. "I will believe nothing against him without proof."

"Amy!" There was a tone of reproof now in her mother's voice.

The carriage had come. She began to envelope herself in her warm furs.

"Promise me you will not dance with Mr. Rathlan to-night," said her mother, following her to the door.

She turned round, gave her a kiss, an unusual token of affection, and glided lightly down the stairs.

"God bless her!" murmured Mrs. Bernard, as she stepped back to the window in time to see the light figure handed into the carriage by Colonel Devereux, and the showy equipage move off. "She has her father's spirit; how can I blame her? She may be half-right, too. So rich, so beautiful, no wonder the judge is ambitious for a great match."

Perhaps Mrs. Bernard's reasoning did not prove quite sufficient, for she turned away, after all, with a little sigh. She thought of the days of her own youth; she had married for love herself, and she could not but wish this privilege might have been accorded to her child. Her lot had not been a very happy one, either, with all its outward grandeur. To-night she caught herself thinking that she had never been so happy as

in the little cottage in the humble suburb of Hampstead, to which her husband had brought her as their bridal home. He had changed very much since then. A wide gulf lay between the companion and sharer of those straitened but golden years, and the stern, self-absorbed lawyer of to-day. True, a great sorrow had broken upon her in her yet early married life—the death of the son who was just approaching manhood, ripening in every excellence. She had never felt reconciled to this mournful dispensation; she had said she never could. Alas, Mrs. Bernard, a sorrow to which that is dumb, never to be named in the same day with this, is close at hand; its shadow even now is over you.

Neither Judge Bernard nor his wife dreamed of the full extent of their daughter's acquaintance with Mr. Rathlan; he had proposed, and, as in duty bound, laid his hopes and prospects before the parents; but of the many opportunities which his ingenuity extorted to urge his suit in the little interval following their rejection, the father at least had no suspicions.

To-night Amy had received a proposal for an elopement, a proposal to which she had replied, neither consenting nor refusing. She loved her suitor; she had all those exterior attractions which are so winning to woman, and she inwardly despised her father's selfish policy, which she believed she fully understood. It is true her delicacy shrank from an elopement; but what was to be done? As her lover said, it was the only way. Opposition would at once cease when the parents found the matter was irrevocable; they would be glad to be the first to hush up the story.

Amy danced the first dance with Colonel Devereux the second with a stranger presented by her hostess, and then Rathlan, who had purposely kept in the background, came forward to claim her.

They went out into the conservatory. Amy yielded to the movement, which on her companion's part was not without a purpose. The walks, thickly bordered with blossoms, were nearly vacant, for the dance was going on in the rooms they had quitted.

Rathlan urged his suit again, and with more than his usual eloquence. He spoke of the hopelessness of their prospects; of her father's determined opposition, and, distantly, of his purpose, which she was slowly beginning to understand, to compel the bestowment of her hand upon Colonel Devereux. Youth and middle age—a heart, too, already preoccupied. Amy shuddered.

"There is only one way of escape, my love. Unite your fate with mine. The minister is in readiness. See, I have counted upon your consent."

She made a shuddering movement to loose her hand from his clasp, and her colour changed. It was her mother's face which seemed to come before her on the instant, pale, sorrowful, as she had seen it an hour ago.

"It is only a little step, Amy, and so much lies beyond."

She wavered still, but her fingers no longer struggled in his hold. A gleam of exultation lighted up his face. There was no time to lose; another moment might be too late, and he knew it. He bent towards her, releasing her hand, for another couple were entering the alcove.

"Let me lead you to the dressing-room," he whispered. "I will join you in a moment. I have a carriage at hand."

The dance was going on when they re-entered the drawing-rooms. All eyes were riveted upon the quadrille. Colonel Devereux was invisible. They passed unobserved to the staircase. "I will join you in a moment," whispered Rathlan, releasing her cold hand and turning away.

She was certainly ill; her pale face showed that to the waiting-maid who assisted her in putting on her cloak and hood; and Mr. Rathlan was kindly about to take her home.

She found herself in the carriage. The storm was beginning to rage fearfully, but she felt nothing of the fast falling flakes or the chill north wind, in her warm wrappings.

CHAPTER II.

MIDNIGHT came and passed. The judge slept the sound, unbroken sleep of mental weariness; his wife, on the pillow beside him, sobbed and wept in the trances of a frightful dream.

The winter storm was still raging when they came around the breakfast-table; the street was piled with white masses, and the fantastic wreaths lay in every shape around the slender shrubs of the garden.

Amy had not come down. The servant went up to call her. She returned with a startled look. The room was empty!

Judge Bernard put down his cup, and made a movement as if to rise to go to his daughter's room, then checked himself. "She must have gone home with some of her young friends," he said; "but no, that is not likely. Jane, go up again," he added, sharply, to

the waiting maid, "and see if your young lady returned last night."

The girl went up, and came back with an answer in the negative. The room had been untouched—everything lay as she had left it on the past night.

The judge frowned moodily. A suspicion of the truth began to cross his mind. He looked at his wife. She had sat white and silent through the whole of this little scene, not daring to trust herself with words. The blow had fallen heavily upon her. She understood the worst.

The judge pushed back his chair and rose from the table. He turned his steps to the library. Mrs. Bernard rose and went up to her daughter's chamber. Her search was useless; there was not a line or word to throw light upon this cruel step.

It was not far from noon when the first mail came in from London. The post brought a letter for Judge Bernard. His wife took it to the library, faintly hoping it might throw a light on the painful transaction of the past night. She knocked for the second time before she obtained admission.

The judge was seated in his arm-chair, before his desk strewn with papers, to all appearance absorbed in the usual business of the morning; but as he lifted his face, the added weight of a dozen years seemed to have passed over it in a few hours.

Mrs. Bernard laid down the letter before him, and lingered. It was a few lines traced in Amy's familiar handwriting, which the removal of the dainty sheet from the envelope disclosed. The judge glanced at the name traced by trembling fingers at the close, and gave it back to his wife. "I wish to know no further," he said, sternly. "I have now no daughter."

His wife's lips moved as if to speak, but the appealing words stopped beneath his cold eye. She tried to rally. "Only one word," she said faintly.

"Not one," said her husband, harshly. "She has chosen her lot. She had everything her heart could ask—where did we cross her? I told her he was a gambler, and sought nothing but her fortune. Henceforth she is dead to us—let me never hear her name!"

He took up one of the scattered papers which lay before him; his wife stood for a moment longer, and then, with a hopeless sigh, went out. In her own chamber she turned to her daughter's letter:

"MY DEAR FATHER,—I entreat your forgiveness," ran the few hurried lines, "for the undutiful step I have taken. I am most unhappy, remembering the anxiety which you and my mother must suffer. Forgive me that I have chosen for myself. I could not marry where my heart could not go with my hand; it is the only instance in my life in which I have displeased you. Have pity for me, and relieve my anxiety to hear from you. I wait impatiently for your answer."

AMY RATHLAN.

Foolish girl, to think these few words could erase her disobedience! Had Rathlan known the old judge better, he would never have urged his fair mistress to this clandestine marriage, but how could he dream that hot anger and pride could outweigh the prayers of an only child and the tears of a tender mother?

He had not expected a reply at once, and he was not surprised that days should go by in silence. His bride, whose disappointment was keen, wept over the coming in of each empty post; it seemed as if a pre-sciency of the future was beginning to break upon her; he tried to cheer her with promises of reconciliation drawn from his own faith; she believed, and faint smiles took the place of tears.

But as days deepened into weeks, his own doubts began to gather. Amy wrote again; this time a letter came; how eagerly she tore it open; alas! it contained her own unbroken envelope. She looked up to catch the frown upon her husband's brow; in that look a new terror struck her; she turned white, and for a moment her senses forsook her.

It was easy, on reviving, to believe what was now so necessary, to listen to Rathlan's lover-like assurances, who, after all, was not utterly heartless, and felt some pity for the helpless girl thrown so awkwardly upon his hands. He was far from sure, too, that the game was up, as he mentally phrased it; the old judge must relent.

Amy wrote once again, this time to her mother, but her letter received no answer.

Action of some kind must take place; Rathlan had arrived at the close of his original fortune, which had never been very large, and he resolved to proceed to Leeds.

It was a fresh sorrow to Amy to quit even the vicinity of her old home, but she had no choice. Her husband did not think it necessary to tell her the object of this visit—that since the dowry he had expected to receive with her was withheld, he was thrown back upon the gaming-table, which had already helped to supply his purse; but he announced that sudden business summoned him thither, and as his absence might be prolonged for weeks, he could not think of leaving

her with strangers. Accordingly they proceeded to that town.

One more letter Amy wrote to her mother on the eve of her sorrowful departure, and then turned to the new life she had so blindly chosen.

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER year. It is mid-winter again. A pale and sorrowful wife, at the still hour of midnight, sits waiting the return of her husband. There is not a sound to break in upon her vigils, save the solitary footfall in the street, which now and then comes up out of the stillness, passes on, and dies out in the distance. A slumberous silence wraps the chambers of her home. There is no human being to share her watch. She sits by the window, wrapped in her dressing-gown and shawl, the pale moonbeams gliding over her soft brown hair, her head bent forward, and half-reclining upon her hand. It was not the first hour by many in which the still night has come and found her here, even at the grey break of morning. Other wives and women bend to their wretchedness—she cannot—she struggles against it heart and soul. The first wrong step taken, what is there left? The man is her husband; he has deceived her, but she loves him; she knows, too, that he is all she has to cling to upon earth. If he will only reform—if he will only put the dice and the wine-cup from him.

List! a step halts upon the pavement below; there is the rattle of a key in the door; it is earlier than his wont, this return, and eager to catch at every straw of hope, she builds upon that.

"Up still, Amy?" his voice was stern, as he stopped upon the threshold; there was an angry frown upon his brow.

"I could not sleep," faltered his wife, her gentle blue eyes turning pleadingly upon him.

"Pshaw!" he muttered, "a curse on your officiousness; haven't I told you how it annoys me? Let me have no more of it henceforth."

He had lost, that was plain. Amy's glance fell beneath his stern look. She retired to her couch and feigned sleep, while he took the vacant chair by the window, and sat looking out moodily on the grey pavements flooded in the moon.

He had passed the wine-cup to-night; he had kept his head cool, but worse than his late fortune had attended him; at every stake he had lost; in his blind eagerness he had thrown his last pounds away.

What should he do? He would make Amy write to her mother; the old lady might send her something out of her means; it was a lucky thought; as for the judge, of course the case there was hopeless. If the old man should die—how his heart leapt at the thought—but no, of course he had made a will. How hard-hearted he was to cast off his only child.

The morning broke. Amy rose from the light slumber into which she had at last fallen, and began her toilet. Breakfast over, she came back to her chamber, where her husband shortly joined her. There was a change in his manner—a kindness which she had not seen for weeks, and she hesitated whether this might not offer an opening for the words which lay upon her heart. Alas! the next sentence broke the delusive dream.

"I am short of money, Amy; the expenses of our living, and my ill-luck last night. Suppose you write to your mother again, and this time tell her how unfortunately we are circumstanced—a trifling embarrassment—and ask her to send you a present."

The wife grew a shade paler; she dropped her eyes beneath his.

"I don't think it would answer my purpose," she said; "papa would not allow her to answer my letters."

"Without his knowledge," said Rathlan, bluntly. "Come, Amy, you will certainly be reasonable. A little loan will help me very materially. On my word, I'm hard-pressed just now."

The poor girl shook her head. She had some pride left, and this humiliation was too great. What, write to her parents that all their warnings had proved true—tell her poor mother her shame and wretchedness? Of what avail, too, would be a little help? It would be wasted in the next hour at the gaming-table.

Rathlan went to her writing-desk and took out paper and pen.

"Come, Amy," he said, hurriedly, "I am in haste; this must go out by the morning's post."

She did not move. He approached her with a threatening gesture.

"You will not compel me to use force?" he said, angrily. "The letter I will certainly have."

She sat down without further words, but how to write? She began, and laid down the pen in despair.

"I cannot, and I will not!" she said, with sudden energy; "no force shall compel me."

Rathlan was surprised; he allowed her to rise. The resolute expression of her face showed him that any

but the most violent coercion would prove fruitless. He had his own motive for not resorting to this.

"Well," he said angrily, "you shall repent; I warn you!" and sitting down to the desk himself, he traced off a few lines in her daughter's name to Mrs. Bernard, and folded the sheet.

Amy looked on in troubled silence; she was at no loss to trace their purport.

He went out, and she was left alone. The keenest sense of degradation pressed upon her. The young, wilful heart which had inflicted such pangs upon others, in this hour found them returned tenfold upon itself.

Weeks passed on and no answer arrived.

Amy missed her mother's miniature, set in a rich casing, from her drawer, and her miniature gold watch, her father's last birthday gift, from its nightly place upon her toilet table. She said nothing; she knew into whose hands they had passed, but her heart steeled itself with a new bitterness. Her old love was beginning to wane; she trembled at the discovery; respect had gone, and how could love live on under harshness and neglect? Another subject of resentment was soon added. She found herself an object of what she regarded as insulting attentions to one of her husband's intimate companions—and this man's insidious approaches were plainly not discouraged by Rathlan. We do not mean that he had as yet arrived at the period when he would gladly have thrown off his wife, or accepted the dishonour which his friend would have put upon him, but he was not unwilling, in his desperate circumstances, to borrow money of the only person who, from such motives, was disposed to lend it to him.

Amy's cup of repentance was full, but she had no way to turn. Her parents had cast her off, even her kind mother. She must submit to her lot, or beg. A new anxiety began to present itself. Rathlan's mood was changing from its sullenness to a still more intolerable harshness. Curses, threats of separation began to find their place upon his lips. What if he should leave her? What would become of her, alone in that city of strangers, alone in the world? She wept often now, tears enough to have expiated her fault, but no succour came.

Months went by. Rathlan quitted Leeds suddenly on a trip to Manchester. He left her behind, trembling, doubting of his return. But he came back. He returned in unusual spirits—he had evidently found his visit a profitable one. A little outward calm followed; outward, for none of the causes of her sorrow were removed.

CHAPTER IV.

AGAIN Rathlan lost, and again his sullen mood returned. His credit was exhausted; he found himself compelled to quit the apartments at which they had hitherto been staying, and remove to humbler quarters. Here oaths, quarrels and harsh scenes passed before the eyes of the shrinking woman; and on one occasion, when, maddened by wine and his ill-luck at play, her husband lifted his hand to strike her, his companion, to whom we have before alluded, Isleton, interposed for her protection. She made her escape to her chamber, and shut herself in. She was too startled now to take refuge in weeping. What could she do? Alas, there was no opening for escape. To write again to her parents was hopeless. They had indeed cast her off.

She sat all day without going down to her accustomed meals. At nightfall her husband came in. It was some trifling errand which had brought him; he had forgotten that she was there, and glanced at her with a savage scowl as he crossed the room. He went out, and she was again alone. She listened drearily to the echo of his steps as they descended the stairs and passed out on the street.

Hour after hour went by; the twilight had fallen, and the stars came out one by one in the darkness. The step of the passer-by grew less frequent on the pavement, the heavy tramp of the throng ceased altogether, and the dismal stillness showed that the midnight had come on.

Amy still sat with her feverish temples pressed against the cold glass of the casement, and her fingers interlaced helplessly in her lap.

Her trance was broken by the sudden clang of footsteps in the street, and the imperious ring of the bell. She started and rose. The sound was not unusual in this place at the hour, but one of those presentiments for which it is impossible to account, and which, perhaps, all of us have at some time experienced, seized upon her.

The door opened. There was a muffled altercation below, not oaths and curses, but the clash of husk voices, and then the heavy tread began to ascend the stairs, and came in the direction of her chamber.

At the door there was a little hesitation; some one knocked. She crossed tremblingly to admit her visitors.

The light which the foremost held streamed upon an insensible form extended on a rude litter borne by his companions, whose bandaged head revealed some dangerous or mortal wound.

"My husband!" faltered Amy, staggering back. The men brushed past her, and placed their burden on the bed.

"Water, my good woman," said one. "Come, he's only fainted—it's a bad blow—but he'll soon come to."

Amy thought there was death in the white face, but she tried to collect herself. She besought one of the men to go for a surgeon, which he did with some unwillingness, and she waited with much uneasiness his arrival.

It was nearly an hour before he made his appearance, and then Rathlan had revived under her trembling applications, but she saw, to her alarm, that he was wholly unconscious of his situation. The wound had affected his brain; he believed himself still in the haunt from which his companions had borne him, and it was with the utmost difficulty, aided by the assistance of the landlord's son, whom she fortunately succeeded in calling in, that she could persuade him to remain on the bed.

The surgeon arrived at last, and on removing the bandages, pronounced his wound a very severe but not necessarily dangerous one. He left prescriptions for the fever, ordered a nurse, promised to call again in the course of the morning, and went away.

A new turn was given to Amy's thoughts; she took up her place as a faithful watcher by the sick man's couch. Days went by, a whole week, before a glimpse of consciousness visited his pillow. When it came he found himself helpless as a child.

It was not in the nature of things, hardened as he was, that he should be quite unconscious of the care and kindness bestowed upon him. His sense of these showed itself in the subdued tones in which he addressed his wife, and in his evident endeavours to restrain the impatience natural to his situation.

Amy began to build hopes anew in those long days of convalescence.

Rathlan, softened by suffering, seemed really to look with regret towards the past. Alas, who would trust him in his new-formed purposes of reformation—who was there to reach out a pitiful and helping hand?

Amy thought the matter over eagerly. A fresh appeal to her parents would be hopeless. She had an uncle, a wealthy merchant, who resided at F—. Mr. Bernard had ample means to assist them, or she believed so, if only the disposition were supplied. Could she dare to count upon it? She remembered her visit to her uncle's home only a few months previous to her unfortunate marriage, the kindness which had welcomed her, the sisterly affection of her cousin Ethel, the maternal regard of her aunt. Had all this died out?

She broke the subject to Rathlan. He, with his knowledge of the world shook his head gloomily, perhaps he doubted also the strength of his own resolution.

But Amy would not be discouraged. She sat down that very evening, when her husband had dropped into a light slumber, to pen her appeal:

"MY DEAR UNCLE,—I am writing you at the side of my husband's sick bed. I am compelled to apply to you in our great necessity. My father, as you know, has disinherited me for my marriage, and will receive no communications from me. I do not attempt to blame him—we were both wrong, very wrong; I will not ask you, what I fear would not be in your power to do, to bring about our reconciliation, but to afford me a little aid, to procure for my husband in his convalescence a situation in which, however humble it may be, he may obtain for the present the means of an honourable support. He has been imprudent, I do not deny it, but the gambling-table has not been his choice, but his necessity. He is eager to return to a better life. Trust him, dear uncle, with some office, which, without a great responsibility, will prove to you his truth and sincerity; and save him from the course which he is eager to relinquish. I appeal to you tremulously; you do not know how much I look to your answer—we have not another friend in the world. If you deny us, no one will help us. I pray you, by all your past kindness to me when I was in your happy home, do not turn away from us."

She sealed the letter, eager to despatch it before her husband awoke.

Poor Amy, did a vision of her worldly-wise uncle, the old merchant, absorbed in his gains and speculations, rise up before her as she traced the superscription with a sigh?

Day after day went by. Rathlan was just able to quit his bed for the low lounge by the window and the morning papers, and Amy had been counting over uneasily the few shillings remaining in their purse, when the long-awaited letter arrived.

She tore it open eagerly; a note rustled to the floor.

Only ten pounds. The paltry sum! She placed it on the table and began to read:—

"MRS. RATHLAN,—Your letter came duly. I am surprised, after all that has passed, at your application to me. I am well acquainted with your husband's character; no assistance would do him any good. As to yourself, you chose your lot in leaving one of the most indulgent of parents. I inclose a trifle for your present necessities, desiring that you will not intrude upon me again."

"WILLIAM BERNARD."

Amy laid down the harsh epistle. Her husband took it up.

"Well," he said, with a sneer, "it's no better than I expected. Let the miser keep his money. What, tears, Amy? What's the use?"

After all, her disappointment was bitter. She had dared to hope.

CHAPTER V.

At this period Amy would have said that the darkest days of her life had come, that the future could hold nothing more intolerable, but in this she erred, for a still darker hour was at hand. It was some six weeks from the date of her husband's convalescence, when she found herself suddenly arrested in a shop in which she was in the act of making some trifling purchase, on the charge of passing counterfeit money. Such was the character of a note which she had passed to the shopman, and such, on examination, were found to be two other notes remaining in her purse. Her husband had given them to her only the day previous; she knew well from whom she had received them; and the shock of the moment, with the horror of accusing him, kept her silent.

It was still early in the day, and she was hurried into a cab by the humanity of the police-officer called in, who discovered that her distress had deprived her of the power to walk the long distance, and taken at once to the place of examination. Here the charge was made, and she was locked up.

On the following morning she was placed in the dock. It was a white and startled face which confronted the magistrate. The court demanded her name. Perhaps it was a wrong impulse which led her to take shelter in a false one. She stopped in the act, and checked herself, refusing to make any answer. Her modest deportment, her extreme distress, attracted the attention of the spectators. Her air of refinement, even of superior station, could not escape their notice. She was plainly not of the usual class of criminals who came before that bar. The law knows no distinctions. The judge, unmoved, bent his eyes upon the shrinking prisoner. If guilty, so much the more criminal, with those fascinations of beauty and innocence.

"I have no counsel, I am friendless," murmured Amy, to his first question.

A lawyer stepped forward, and offered to undertake her defence; but he feared there was no hope for his client under present aspects, and her forlorn situation inspired him with pity. There was a mystery behind her plain assumption of guilt which he was disposed to penetrate.

She might have spoken, but a shrinking dread seized her. In her despair, she began to believe that her husband had purposely sacrificed her; that he had taken this means to rid himself of her, and accomplish the separation to which she would never have voluntarily yielded. The last rays of hope deserted her at this conviction, and she sank down in a swoon.

When she revived, she found herself in a narrow cell, into which the light streamed dimly through a small aperture. The officer had just gone out, after bathing her temples in water, and watching her returning consciousness.

Amy tried to hide her face, as a dreary sense of hopelessness came over her. A merciful stupor seemed to take the place of grief. She was aroused by the entrance of the officer, who convinced her that she would be taken care of till her complete recovery. Reassured, she slept a long sleep from the very weariness of sorrow.

The morning dawned; the officer re-entered with some refreshment; but Amy felt no desire to break her fast; she listened without reply to his well-meant remonstrance, and the man went out.

An hour passed away, the key grated in the lock, and the officer ushered in a visitor, whom she recognized as the lawyer who had undertaken her case in the court.

A faint flush of shame dyed Amy's cheek at his entrance. She made no return to his courteous bow as he sat down.

"I have called to see you early, madam, upon the business of this examination," he began at once.

Amy made no answer, unless the rigid locking of her folded hands could be termed a reply.

The lawyer threw a curious glance at her. Her

countenance had before struck him as familiar, on her first appearance in the court; he puzzled himself to recall where they had met.

"I trust," he resumed, as she still remained silent, "that you are by this time prepared to confide to me your name, and I will venture to hope permission to apply to your friends?"

"I have none," said Amy, despairingly. "I have already told you."

"You must be mistaken, madam; some fault or imprudence may have estranged them, but under such circumstances—"

Amy shook her head.

"Oh, sir, you do not know."

"At least," said Mr. Langley, "they would exert their influence to prevent the disgrace."

The last words had the effect he designed. A convulsive shudder passed over her, but she made no reply.

"Trust me as your counsel, madam," he resumed. "I should not have undertaken this case without my impressions of your innocence. You plead not guilty—how do you account for your possession of these notes?"

"I cannot tell," said Amy, faintly.

"You would leave me to infer that they were placed in your purse by some enemy for a malevolent purpose?"

"O, I received them—"

"You perceive," said Mr. Langley, "the urgency of the case. You are terrified by your position, and your thoughts are not clear. All that is necessary, is to establish the identity of the person from whom you received them, and you will be acquitted."

"I cannot," said Amy, turning away her face. "I beg you will leave me, sir. I thank you for your kindness, but I cannot tell you."

"This is madness," said the lawyer, impatiently. A momentary doubt began to steal over him. Was she guilty after all? A second glance at her face banished the suspicion. Where had he seen that face before? A glimmering recollection told him in scenes very unlike this.

"Were you ever in ———, madam?" he asked abruptly.

Amy started; the glance at her questioner, the frightened look, were a sufficient answer.

"You recall very strikingly," he continued, "a lady I once saw in that city. I had not the honour of an acquaintance with her, though I met her twice or thrice at assemblies, and once danced with her at a ball. Her name was Miss Bernard."

"You know me," faltered Amy, sensible that her agitation was betraying her. You will not reveal my name, for my poor mother's sake?"

Langley waited until her emotion subsided.

"I have heard something of your history," he resumed, "and I am not now at a loss for your silence. But, believe me, this clemency is misplaced. You will but sacrifice yourself, and to no purpose."

The officer's step was heard in the passage.

Langley rose. "I will see you again," he said.

"Meanwhile, give me Mr. Rathlan's address. I will see what can be done."

Amy did so, but with some misgivings.

CHAPTER VI.

AMY now broke her long fast; a glimmer of hope was beginning to dawn upon her. It was something to find one friend, for such the young lawyer certainly appeared. She could not tell what she had to hope from his application to her husband, as we have shown the gnawing fear had begun to fasten itself upon her that Rathlan had purposely sacrificed her, but in a calmer mood she began to dismiss this suspicion. She knew little of the close searching of the law; she thought that Rathlan might be able to save her without dangerously involving himself.

An hour or two passed, but no lawyer made his appearance; however, the officer came and announced her liberation.

The announcement took her by surprise. She hurried on her bonnet and shawl with trembling hands.

"There is a carriage waiting for you," said the man, who lingered to see her out.

It was her husband—she could think of no one else, and she hurried out into the passage.

Again in the free air, how clear and fresh it all was, the sky, the street, after those long days.

It was a private carriage which stood in waiting. Amy stopped on the steps. The coachman got down and opened the door. A lady's face bent towards her from the window. There was something familiar about it; she drew near with a thrill of surprise.

The coachman offered her his assistance. She took her place, feeling like one in a dream, on the cushions beside the lady.

"My dear Mrs. Rathlan, you do not remember me?"

"I do, Mrs. Mordant—but I am wholly at a loss—"

"Oh, you do not know then. Mr. Langley is my nephew—did you not get his note?"

"I have heard nothing until this moment."

Mrs. Mordant fell into a little fit of reflection. The carriage turned into a second street.

"Tell me," said Amy with much anxiety, "how my release has been brought about, and where is my husband?"

"My dear," said the lady, kindly, taking her hand, "I will tell you nothing now. We shall soon be at home, and then you shall know all."

It was a kind Providence which had raised her up such a friend in this dark hour. Amy felt so when in her chamber in the handsome mansion into which she was led, the pleasant home which for the present was to be hers.

All the particulars she never knew, or could bear to know; but she heard that her husband was dead, and that his death had taken place by violence. Accidentally hearing of Amy's capture, he immediately took poison, but left in his bedroom a note making the confession of his guilt, and entirely exonerating his unhappy wife. What he had taken had both rapidly and effectually done its work. He had been of late engaged in the passing of counterfeit money; this had been known.

Amy shed some tears over this sudden event; she would have been less than a woman had she felt no grief; and then, after the first shock was over, her thoughts turned wistfully towards her parents. Mrs. Mordant had shown her sympathy and kindness in this hour; could she hope less from such near relatives?

When the first relief of tears was over, she expressed this hope. Mrs. Mordant gave her little encouragement. She thought it her duty to acquaint her with her nephew's unavailing application to her aunt, who was then on a visit to Leeds, which had preceded his appeal to herself. Any relents in that quarter must be a work of time.

Amy acquiesced sorrowfully. What she should do was a question which soon began to weigh heavily upon her thoughts. Her delicacy shrank from the idea of remaining a burden upon her kind benefactress.

Mrs. Mordant, after vainly combating this reluctance, settled the question by consenting to her plan of becoming a music teacher, and using her influence to procure her pupils. Perhaps this project was yielded to more readily on the part of that lady, by the sudden suspicion of her nephew's interest in her young protegee, an interest which in her still early widowhood was quite unknown to Amy, for warmly as she appreciated her amiable character, she could not but feel that his choice could be much better directed.

It was a bleak life which spread before Amy, but she tried to take it up with patience and fortitude. Not the least of her petty trials was the encounter on an early occasion with her cousin Ethel, when that young lady bestowed upon her a haughty stare of forgetfulness.

But Mr. Langley, through the half-open door of the library opposite, where, for the last half-hour, he had been waiting the appearance of the master of the house on some important business, saw and heard it all, and Ethel Bernard not long afterward found, to her dismay, that the matrimonial alliance she had begun to count upon was completely broken off.

Langley suddenly discovered that it was in his power to restore his late client to her old place in her father's affections, and only in one way, by showing to the world his own conviction that one false step does not necessarily mar a life. He proposed, and with long delay and much hesitation, was accepted.

Judge Bernard would never have forgiven his daughter as Mrs. Rathlan, but as Mrs. Langley, why not? The wedding-card was not returned, but a note from Mrs. Bernard spoke the thankfulness and joy of the long-suffering mother's heart.

Both of these events were keenly unwelcome to the uncle, the stern merchant, whom Amy believes even now, falsely, perhaps, but at times pityingly, might have saved the wretched gambler from his utter ruin and untimely grave. His prosperous fortunes were tottering to a fall; rash speculations had diminished his income, and new misfortunes were threatening in the distance. The judge's property, in the event of his daughter's continued disinheritance, would have fallen to his niece—at least the bulk of his estates; but now this was lost. He was unwise in having written to her with such harshness; he should have temporized, and assisted the unhappy couple; then this might have been provided against.

Amy had suffered too much not to have learned the golden lesson of forgiveness. When on her first visit to her old home, her uncle's letter entreating a temporary loan arrived, she said nothing of her own dis-

daind application in her hour of need, but allowed her father's heart to open to the call. It proved ineffectual, however, for Mr. Bernard failed, died of his misfortunes and trouble—the doctors called it apoplexy—and Judge Bernard, through the remainder of his life, granted a moderate allowance to the widow and orphan, which was nobly continued to them by Amy after his death. M. R.

LOYAL-HEARTED.

"What a pity women are not always young and handsome."

He said it honestly enough. Indeed, from Ward Huntingdon's stand-point, any other eyes tintured with artistic harmony might have desired the same thing. The picture would have been perfect but for the face of Agnes Thayer. Two girls sitting under a clump of trees, while far down in front of them sloped a grassy bank, corded at its edge by a placid silver river. Above them clustered branches of brilliant blossoming vines, with pendants in scarlet, orange, and those deep, lovely shades of gold, amber and brown. Pale and deep green foliage were intermixed. From above the sunshine sifted fine grains of bright light upon them, and at their feet lay in a broad, unbroken plain. Flora Ellis sat leaning against an old ivy-covered tree. In her soft, golden curls she had woven scarlet berries intermixed with small drooping white lilies. Her pearly complexion, her regular, clear-cut, dainty features, the exquisite colouring of cheek and lip, and the lustrous purple blue eyes, made a picture not easily forgotten.

Agnes Thayer was taller, larger in every respect. Only a certain high-bred dignity kept her from being pronounced coarse. Her features were large and unsymmetrical, not one positively bad, but all wanting that indefinable grace constituting beauty. Her hair was smooth, soft brown, with no ripple or lustre. True, there was an abundance of it, and the coil of braids at the back did not show a single straggling lock. Her eyes were dark grey, tranquil, having no thought in their depths to conceal. The forehead was perhaps a thought too high; the mouth too wide for one unbroken by petulant curls or playful dimples. It was not a face in which some magnificent emotion seemed slumbering. It had reached the climax. Love would not cause it to blossom, nor passion ripen it into new phases. Glancing at it, one instinctively said: "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Yet it was not soulless. Humanly tender, warm and fond, with occasional flushes of feeling—this was Agnes Thayer at twenty-six. Her cousin Flora was seventeen.

"Think again, Agnes. I am sure Mr. Aubrey is every way eligible. And his child is such a sweet little girl, I should almost like to be mother to her myself. Besides you know, her grandmother has no other heir; most likely she will provide handsomely for her. And then Mr. Aubrey is not entirely dependent on his parish, although his people seem to love him dearly."

"I believe they do. He is a good, honourable man; no woman would ever be compelled to blush for him."

"Why don't you accept him, then?"

"I do not love him."

"It was very simply said."

"But, Agnes," and there was a little remonstrance in the tone, "when I first came here you confessed to liking him very much. If you would try, you could love him, I know. It's a fine chance, and, dearest—"

"I am twenty-six, and may never have another. Was that what you thought?"

Flora flushed a little, and looked curiously at her cousin, as she answered:

"Not exactly that. Only you may never be able to do quite so well again."

"All very true. In eight years I have received two offers of marriage; probably my chances will decrease in the next period of that length; so I cannot count on but one more. The prospect looks rather forlorn, does it not? I might have to remain an old maid, Miss Thayer."

"You are so distant, Aggie darling; and you never flirt or make the most of yourself, like other girls. No one knows how good you are. I think Mr. Aubrey should be rewarded for finding out the truth. Why cannot you love him?"

A warm colour overspread the tranquil face, and she replied, in a quicker tone than she had used before:

"Am I so different from other women that I can make myself love any man who chooses to ask me in marriage? Perhaps even for me:

Love is a star from heaven, that points the way
And leads us to its home—a little spot
In earth's dry desert, where the soul may rest—
A grain of gold in the dull sand of life—
A foretaste of Elysium."

"If you mean to play Parthenia, you must find an Ingomar. The heroes are all dead. And Sir Gala-

had's quest was not a woman's love. I am wicked enough to like Launcelot better for every-day life."

"I am not searching for an impossible ideal," and Agnes raised her head proudly. "I may never marry, but if I do, I must love the man I choose with something stronger and deeper than the mere satisfactory feeling that it is as good a marriage as I shall ever be able to make. He must be all to me, and leave no yearning in my heart for vague dreams of what might have been; the pilot to whose steady hand I can commit my bark of woman's faith with unfaltering trust; and sitting in the silence, listen to the breakers and face the frowning rocks with no thought of fear, no doubt or questioning. Love and faith must be perfect, absolute. I have no such feeling towards Mr. Aubrey; neither have I any right to take the place of a woman who may have."

She had raised her voice a little, and Ward Huntingdon, from his grassy couch, heard every word. The sentiment should have transfigured her face; he felt a little disappointed that it did not. Then Flora's laugh rang out; if the silvery notes were incongruous, the music was too charming to be criticised, and she said, a little faithlessly:

"My dear, do you suppose women ever love that way?"

He lost the answer, for he was saying to himself, "Wait a few weeks, Flora, and you will learn how women love, when a man, strong, earnest, and tender, holds the key to their hearts."

Flora's rejoinder floated on the summer air to him.

"Agnes, you are better and less selfish than other women. Now let us go and find Ward. He must have smoked and slept to his heart's content."

He met her with this sweet admission still rosy on her lips. They were lovers—not open and acknowledged.

It was a pleasure to Ward Huntingdon to hold the distant tie of relationship existing between them, like a veil, over the path by which he was leading her. So young, so beautiful, his abounding faith in her led him to believe she could be easily moulded into the ideal woman of his dreams. And just now he felt a strange, tender feeling for Agnes Thayer. Why had she not been made as attractive outwardly as she was noble in spirit. He did not think beauty and goodness must necessarily be divorced.

Three months before this, Ward Huntingdon had brought his cousin north. He had delayed, in order to secure her property, as she was an orphan, and, by his father's death, confided to his care. One of her mother's sisters had sent for her; the other, gentle, lovable Mrs. Thayer, had long been dead. But one of her early school-vacations spent at Doctor Thayer's had given her a clinging, childish claim on Agnes.

In this pleasant country seclusion Ward Huntingdon's love had thriven rapidly. Perhaps Flora seemed lovelier by constant contrast with her cousin. Gentle, timid, clinging, these seemed her chief characteristics. He liked her dependence; he wanted a wife he could gather to his bosom, and feel himself master of every thought. She could be gay or silent, as the season required, for she had that subtle instinct that divines and harmonizes with moods and desires without understanding any of the great principles of nature. To a certain extent she could satisfy completely. Yet hers was not the tongue or the heart that could have won a man to high deeds or great sacrifices. Beyond herself and her own gratification, her feelings grew weak and cold.

The three walked on together through flowery paths, rendered more glowing and beautiful by the orange tints of the westward sun. Flora forgot Mr. Aubrey and her anxiety for him; she turned to Agnes for interest and sympathy in other themes, and found them abundantly bestowed. Agnes Thayer's nature was grand and generous in the extreme.

A letter from Mrs. Chesterton, an aunt of Flora's, announced a brief visit from her the last week in August. She desired to take Flora to the city for the winter, and cordially invited Agnes to accompany them. The prospect of a change, and perhaps separation, stirred every pulse in Ward Huntingdon's heart, and hastened the avowal he had been delaying for weeks, so sweet to him was Flora's unconscious affection.

It was late that night when Flora came to her cousin's room to talk over the certainty of her happiness. Ward was high-minded, honourable, truth itself indeed; she would trust him the world over; he was fine-looking—she should be so proud of him; and then he was wealthy enough to make her life a perfect fairy dream of delight. She kissed Agnes over and over again, and wished, in her childish generosity, that her cousin could be just as happy as she was. "If you had only accepted Mr. Aubrey," she said regretfully.

"Don't!" Agnes sat up in the midst of the white

moonlight which was flooding the bed. "It would not have made me happy, and I think, dear, he could love any other woman who pleased him just as well as he loved me. Please don't tell Aunt Chesterton when she comes. Let us forget it. And you are very, very happy?"

She did not hear the words she hoped for. Flora was glad and gleeful; no sense of life's great responsibility lying before her, weighed her down; no tender, timid aspirations that she might be enabled to do her duty in the new sphere; no sweet, solemn surety of bliss unrealized, yet none the less certain; no sense of quick, living strength from his manly soul penetrating hers. Agnes was disappointed.

In that silvery silence of midnight she thought of Ward Huntingdon. Her heart had utterly refused to be satisfied with the ordinary esteem offered by her suitor, although she knew him to be a good, trusty man. Could a person lofty, imaginative, keenly susceptible to all fine influences, and possessing the power and strength that he did, be satisfied with the return of affection such a nature as Flora's could give? For now it seemed weak and shallow to her; she had never loved her cousin so little as at this moment. What if in after years he should learn the fearful lesson of secret dissatisfaction? Then she fancied him awakening from his dream into intense and bitterest loneliness. He would be too truly good to revenge himself upon Flora, but oh, what hours of anguish would be his! True, there were many compensations in a man's life. He could join the throng of seekers after fame and high places—feed his heart with Dead Sea apples that would be fair to the eye awhile.

And then another curious sensation stole over her. Was Ward really blinded by Flora, or did he understand, and deliberately choose her from among all women? He was no slow student in human nature. More than once she had been surprised by his keen perceptions, the almost prescience with which he analyzed a person's motives. She had felt, ever since the first day of their acquaintance, that it was well she had no fatal weakness to hide, no faults over which to draw thin veils of conventionalisms, from eyes so keen as his. Not that she thought herself perfect, but in entire truth she was brave. The summer had gone very pleasantly. Ward had been compelled to absent himself on business, but Doctor Thayer's generous hospitality had been pressed on him in such a free yet delicate manner that he felt almost like coming to a father's house. And now Agnes was to be his cousin. Relationship would no longer be a pretext.

Doctor Thayer was delighted at his niece's engagement, although it was no surprise to him. Aunt Chesterton on her arrival pronounced it charming, so the lovers had nothing to do but enjoy the new bond between them.

Disastrous news from the Crimea now came thick and fast. The whole nation seemed awakening to the nature of the mighty struggle before them, and the true great principles involved. Hundreds and thousands flocked to arms. Men wore thoughtful faces and talked in eager, determined tones. Everywhere enthusiasm spread. Doctor Thayer and his daughter espoused the cause warmly. She brought her clear, persuasive voice, her high, noble soul, her chivalric pride that would not have shamed a heroine of the old days. Her strong, daring eyes penetrated the future—her ready brain gave birth to projects that would have startled timid souls. Yet, withal, she kept entirely within the bounds of womanliness and propriety. Even Ward Huntingdon began to experience a strange admiration for her, as he heard her strengthening weak souls, comforting wives and mothers, and exhorting all to their duty.

They had all been to witness a review, and were returning home in the dusky twilight of a brilliant September day. Doctor Thayer had taken some guests in his carriage, so Agnes was riding with Flora and her lover. If she had been less busy with her own thoughts, she must have noticed the silence that Flora vainly tried to break.

At length Ward Huntingdon turned to Agnes, and said, abruptly:

"I heard your conversation with young Dorrance this afternoon. Why do you not talk to me? Don't I owe the country a sacred duty?"

She looked at him steadily a moment. How grave, earnest and tender the eyes were, he could see even through the purple shades of coming night.

"I do not know," she answered, slowly. "It must have been because I had confidence enough in you to know you would do your duty at the right time. You are strong-hearted and brave—you do not need any words from me."

"He will stay at home with me, that is his duty," said Flora, in a self-sufficient tone, that somehow sounded discordant just then. "There are men enough to fight without him."

"Cousin Agnes," he went on, without heeding the

interruption, and lowering his voice to a key that startled her with its pathetic music, "if you had a lover whom you worshipped—mind, I don't mean simply felt a friendly regard for, but loved with a depth and passion that made him the best thing of your life—and this question came up, what would your duty be? what his?"

Flora held out her hand to clasp that of Agnes entreatingly, but her lover caught it, and pressing it to his lips, made a gesture of silence. It was lengthened until the three hearts began to beat almost audibly with suspense.

A strange revelation came to Agnes that moment—the consciousness of bias there would be in loving and being beloved by such a man as this one her cousin held in thrall. Loving with the depth and passion of their natures, being the best thing to each other's life. Standing on the threshold of such bliss, could she sever them with a word? No wonder her breath came hard, and her speech was faltering, as she said:

"After the first bitterness was over, I think I should love him better because he had dared to be so brave."

"Something fell on Ward Huntingdon's hand—a warm, tender tear—and he said to himself, unconsciously, 'How this woman might love some man who could touch the depths of her heart!'"

Flora began a pretty, childish pleading. She had no arguments, no reasons; she did not even advance her love as the strongest claim, but expressed her confidence that he would not go because she wished him to stay.

Dr. Thayer had been offered an appointment in a regiment ready to embark for the seat of the war, and he accepted it, leaving his daughter at home.

That night Doctor Thayer announced his appointment. It had been obtained by some warm friends, and he was urged to go. How narrowly Ward Huntingdon watched Agnes. She was very womanly, exceedingly tender, but not weak.

Mrs. Chesterton began to plau immediately. Agnes would spend the winter with her and Flora. She had long been desiring a visit, but never been able to persuade Agnes to remain longer than a week from her father. They would have such a delightful time, there were always so many amusements in the winter, ending with—"And you'll hardly miss your father, dear."

She meant it in good faith. It was her way of comforting. But when Ward glanced at the face in its white, dumb grief, he came to the rescue, and for the remainder of the evening devoted himself to Mrs. Chesterton and Flora, so that they might not annoy her.

A fortnight later, Agnes Thayer was an inmate of her aunt's elegant mansion. Many a time did she ask herself what she could do to keep her life from becoming the idle, frivolous existence in which her aunt found so much interest. Flora took to it naturally. She had dreamed during school-life of such a gay season as this, a sort of carnival before the sober realities of marriage; as if this would be a fitting preparation for that holy estate. Ward Huntingdon looked on with an abstracted air, taking a sort of cousinly freedom to remain beside Agnes much of the time. She noticed how much graver he grew, and the troubled lines that often crossed his brow. It was not Flora's gaiety—he had a right to restrict that; indeed, he hardly seemed to notice how pleasure-loving she was. At length the explanation came. Flora was dancing in the drawing-room, they two lingering in the conservatory, where art made a perpetual summer.

"Agnes," he began, "do you remember once saying you would trust me to do my duty at the right time? The time has come—I shall not falter?"

There was a long silence. He raised his eyes to see if she understood him, and was answered by a glance. But there was something else in the eyes that he did not then comprehend.

"And Flora?" she asked, slowly.

"I shall be married before I go. It has been a hard struggle between ease and duty. How many times I have wanted to come to you for strength, you never will know. And many, many hours, when I was ready to faint, you comforted me unconsciously. I am able to look the future in the face, and endure all now, thank God."

He seemed, standing there, tall, straight, nobly, manfully proud, the very impersonation of some of the grand old heroes. She was glad of the tie that gave her a right to claim him even slightly.

Ward Huntingdon was mistaken when he thought he had counted all. Flora opposed him with angry vehemence, and Mrs. Chesterton denounced the scheme as utterly absurd. She persuaded Flora a marriage at this juncture would be foolish.

"You have had no young life at all," she said. "Just when you are beginning to enjoy society, and

bid fair to become a favourite, such a step would extinguish you at once. You must stay at home and play the devoted to pictures and furniture, or run the risk of having every one gossip about you. Such a handsome, attractive woman will be noticed, unless she secludes herself. You may as well turn nun at once, and bury yourself for the next three years."

Flora understood the force of this argument herself. Moreover, she greatly enjoyed the sensation she was creating. Then she was too much offended at Ward to make so great a concession. She treated his persuasions with petulant tears, and those of Agnes with haughty, weary indifference, and considered herself ill-used by both.

The days rolled rapidly away. The day of departure came. If Ward had dreamed of Flora's relenting at the last moment, he was doomed to bitter disappointment. But some sad, sweet eyes looked pityingly upon him, some lips spoke words of comfort that "dropped from heaven like dew." In silence and loneliness Agnes's heart bled for him tears of dangerous sympathy. And at the last, when he said:

"Agnes, you will watch over her. Remember she is my most precious treasure, a child now, but I shall find a woman on my return. Make her what you think I shall best love. Guide her, and keep my memory fresh in her heart. Oh, Agnes, cousin, best friend, keep faith, for you have made a hero of one man—taught him what he was, and what he might be."

A singular light flashed up in her face an instant, then died out, leaving as strange and inexplicable a darkness. Did she know she had given Ward Huntingdon a lightning glimpse of her own heart? No, she was too unskilled in love's lore, too ignorant of her own heart, to suspect herself of more than a cousinly regard. And he was too honourable to betray the secret by slightest glance or sign. He did not wish youth or beauty for her now, as he had that summer day, glancing at the picture under the trees; only one strange subtle thought sped through his brain—if there had been no Flora! But there was, and he loved her. His prayer for Agnes was that her pure, noble heart might never awake from the dream to the full revelation.

Both girls missed him greatly. For several days Flora was inconsolable. She would not understand that duty, or country, or any earthly claim, might be rightfully stronger than his promise to be always hers. She wept and blamed in a breath, declared he must have ceased to care for her, or that he had never really loved her, and bewailed her unhappy lot in regarding a man so tenderly who could freely sacrifice his life to another cause without a thought of her. Agnes bore these fretful repinings with a grand, tender patience. It sent a pang of anguish to her heart to hear Ward so bitterly and querulously blamed. How she honoured him for so bravely doing his duty. And there was a corresponding regret that Flora could not see what a comfort it would have been to him to call her by that sweetest of all names, wife.

Mrs. Chesterton soon grew weary of her tearful, complaining beauty, and devised other means of comforting Flora. Agnes saw the good impression she had hoped she was making gradually die away. But Mrs. Chesterton's gaieties were a scorching sun that withered all the good seed. The transition from tears to smiles was speedy; seclusion gave place to the claims of society, and again Flora shone and dazzled, growing more deeply fascinated with these intoxicating draughts of pleasure.

Ward Huntingdon had signalized himself by several acts of daring courage, linked with such admirable forethought that he was first on the list for promotion. He had written freely to Agnes, and more than once his high sense of duty and unflinching patriotism thrilled her. And when he said, "It may seem foolish, but I really do shrink from these promotions; there are men in the ranks as brave and more worthy of high positions than I, men who made their sacrifices with purer hearts than mine. I never shall deem myself better than these brave men to whom fortune has been less kind."

From this and much more of the same import, Agnes turned to Flora's radiant face.

"He is so good, so noble, you ought to be proud of him, Flora."

The bright lip curled perceptibly.

"If he had only gone out in his proper rank, one might have felt proud of him; but a lieutenant! And I do believe he would as soon have gone as a private, if Aunt Chesterton and I had not made such a fuss. Ward used to be so proud, too. I can't understand him at all. When he is promoted he may come home and see me. I shall tell him so;" and Flora gave a light laugh.

Agnes sighed. Would Flora ever know what a brave, self-denying, chivalrous heart lay at her feet? Did she not fear to trample it in the dust? And Agnes would have been more than human if she had not sometimes wondered why such a high soul had never

been offered for her acceptance. She would have given in return all. Yet no weak longing accompanied this thought; neither was she less tender toward Flora. Ever she kept her duty plain before her. The words sounded in her ears like the ceaseless melody of a sea-shell, "Make her what you think I shall best love." It was pleasant to do something for Ward Huntingdon.

The summer campaign with its memorable sieges had just thrilled the land. In many homes there were lamentation and weeping. Yet fashion and pleasure-seeking were not quite stilled. There were gay groups at watering-places and summer resorts.

At one of these Mrs. Chesterton shone in all her glory, as being the *chaperone* of the most beautiful girl, the belle of the season. Flora Ellis bid fair to be surfeited by homage. True, there were whispers of an engagement, little hints that it was flirtations and not offers of marriage that would prove acceptable to Miss Ellis. Certainly she encouraged no exclusive lover. There might have been jealous glances cast at Robert Ashley, but it was only by susceptible gentlemen, whose pride had been wounded by her preference for Mr. Ashley. Prudent mammae shook their heads. Mr. Ashley was not a marrying man. Season after season he had flitted through halls and shady walks beside some fair maiden, but his vows of love were too intangible for faith to build up a future with. If there were pale cheeks and heavy eyes in some home when the sad autumn winds began a dirge for the lost summer, what was it to him? He had given no promise. He had been polite, pleasant, ready to attend to any one who seemed to need an escort, and if women would do foolish things, how could he help it?

So at five and thirty he was handsome, fascinating, and unmarried, an old campaigner in the art of love and pleasure. It pleased him to attract Flora Ellis. Mrs. Chesterton did not object to the intimacy, for she considered Flora safe with him. Younger men might be apt to fall in love with a beautiful woman who dispensed her smiles so freely, and perhaps—Flora might waver in her allegiance. Mrs. Chesterton wished Flora to keep her engagement. Ward Huntingdon had come of an aristocratic old family, whose wealth was equal to their position. She had rather a prejudice against the "new gentry." Beside, Flora could have all the amusement of society in these three years, and then be ready to marry and settle into a dignified matron. So she gave her niece sundry hints, and when friendships grew too warm, extricated her skillfully from the danger. But with Mr. Ashley she saw none, and relaxed her vigilance.

From their first meeting, it was evident Agnes Thayer and Robert Ashley were antagonistic. Light could have no communion with darkness. Her pure, true soul shrank with strong aversion from his glance. She could not tell exactly what she saw in it, but a painful misgiving took possession of her. Deceit and treachery seemed lurking in those deep, wickedly handsome eyes. His voice was smooth and melodious; its sweet music could easily lure to ruin, and something in its depths told Agnes it would be pitiless when the days of pleasure were over, and weariness or disgust reigned predominant. In vain Agnes cautioned.

"My dear," Mrs. Chesterton exclaimed, with a pleasant laugh, "remember that I have seen much more of the world than you ever dreamed of in your seclusion. Mr. Ashley will not wish to marry her, so he is the safest companion she could have."

"But people pronounce him wonderfully fascinating," persisted Agnes, shivering.

"Flora is engaged, you know. I think her much too sensible to give up Ward. Beside, she likes her freedom: she is not anxious to marry. You can safely trust her, my dear; she is only amusing herself, and Mr. Ashley is very gentlemanly. There isn't the slightest danger."

It was not exactly that Agnes thought Flora might be tempted to break her promise. The little daily familiarities growing up between them, barely veiled by the semblance of polite care and attention, was what gave Agnes the most pain. She knew what love and confidence Ward reposed in Flora. In his lonely camp-life he was pleasing himself with pictures of her devotion, her singleness of heart. Instead, she impatiently counted the hours for the coming of another, one who held her hand in lingering clasps and kissed his dimpled whiteness; who whispered in her ear words that sent a crimson flood up from her heart; who walked with her through shady places under the glow of late evening stars, and watched her with all the gallantry of a lover. Was there indeed no danger? Was she keeping her soul true and stainless in its faith toward the absent?

The remonstrances of Agnes were sometimes treated with a careless laugh and kiss; at others with petulant tears. Flora declared at such seasons that Agnes might as well be the grimmest of grandmothers, and shut her up in a dungeon at once, ending with that she meant to ask Ward if he desired she should make

a nun of herself. Precisely what she asked him Agnes never knew, but Flora displayed a letter in great triumph, in which occurred this sentence:—"My darling, I wish you to have all the enjoyment you can. You are too young and lovely to choose seclusion voluntarily, and I will not desire it for you. I am glad you can be happy. I trust your love for me more implicitly than I should 'bonds and imprisonment.'"

Agnes kissed the fair face, and said, fervently, "Only be worthy of his trust." Yet, as Flora danced from the room a deep shadow fell over her heart. She had tried to obey Ward Huntingdon's request sincerely, and learned that she could not. Unconsciously she was deceiving him, filling her letters with sweet, generous words of the woman he loved so well, while her heart told her she kept back the truth. Would he approve of the course of his betrothed? No, she could not disguise the fact to herself. Neither could she be a party to such continued deception. Utter silence or the truth; there was no middle course for her. The latter she could not attempt. Strong as she might be for herself, it was no easy task to read aside the veil and disclose the weakness of the heart Ward Huntingdon had trusted his own with. No, not a word must ever pass her lips against Flora. The other course led to the relinquishment of one of the very joys of her life. What a source of pleasure these pleasant, social letters had been. How she would miss them in the dreary desert of her present life. Never had existence been so idle, so useless with her. Could she find nothing better, no new work to replace the old?

It came to her then, in that weary casting about among troublous waves, that strong hearts and willing hands were sorely needed. Many a high-souled patient woman had given up luxury and ease to minister to the brave men who had left home and all dear to them at the call of their country. They lay on beds of languishing and pain, wounded, weary, sick unto death, longing for some friendly hand to smooth the fevered pillow, or some low, sweet voice to point them to the rest that still remaineth. More than once her father had written a soul-stirring account of a tender nurse and a dying man. She would ask his consent that she might devote herself to this work, and henceforward relinquish Flora, who was past her influence. She could say honestly to Flora's lover that she had tried and failed in the task he had given her, thereby proving herself unfit for it.

Dr. Thayer did not attempt to conceal his pleasure at his daughter's determination. He told her he had longed many times for her steady nerves and cool, soft hands in cases he had seen, where women were so much needed. She had always been a sort of fellow-student with him, and now he cheerfully welcomed her to a broader field. His letter gave her strength for the other task that lay before her.

The "season" was nearly over. As usual, a perfect carnival of gaiety was crowded in the last few days. Flora, brilliantly beautiful, seemed wild with exuberant delight. There was a strange light in her eyes, her nerves seemed quivering with some intense secret emotion. Restless as a butterfly, bewildering all with her singular outbreaks of gay recklessness, one perfect dazzle of animation and beauty, she appeared indeed blossoming into some new and hitherto unthought-of life. What could it be? Agnes felt out of her depths trying to solve it.

Flora had gone to ride with Mr. Ashley. It was hardly dusk, and Agnes sat waiting for a denser shade, ere she turned to her artificial light. This evening she meant to write to Ward Huntingdon; her last letter for a long while; it would be, perhaps, indeed, a final one. With Flora for their special subject no longer, a blank rose between them. There seemed, too, an undefined sense of danger in trusting to chance topics, something that hung before her like a dim shadow, and refused to be penetrated. All her future arrangements had been made. Mrs. Chesterton had called her absurd, tried to coax and laugh her out of her notion, and then, considering her whole duty performed, resigned herself to the worst with commendable grace, at heart rather pleased to be rid of a girl who was so old-fashioned, and absolutely refused to make herself attractive.

So Agnes commenced her letter. How difficult it was to say what she most desired. The sentences seemed cold, unnatural; something that had given correspondence a charm was gone. She shivered with a new sense of desolation.

A low tap at the door startled her. She had left Mrs. Chesterton playing whist; it must be the maid, so she bade her enter.

A strange figure, quite tall, veiled, and muffled in a loose summer burnoose, stood before her. A rapid breathing, a hesitancy of motion, and a sort of half-imploping gesture, caused Agnes to spring up, exclaiming:

"What do you want? Can I do anything for you?"

"Not for me."

The visitor threw aside her veil, disclosing a youthful face, wan and worn by some corroding care, singularly beautiful. After a moment's silence, she said:

"You are Miss Thayer?"

"Yes;" and then Agnes stood irresolute, watching the gleam of the diamond on her visitor's finger.

"Do you know where your cousin, Miss Ellis, is?"

"Gone to ride with Mr. Ashley."

"Gone where? But you don't know. Gone to her destruction; gone with a man who hides a villain's heart under his handsome face. Oh, Miss Thayer, do you love her? They say you are cold and proud, but will you let her rush blindly on to this horrible fate?"

"Yes, I love her, and there is another whose very life is centred in her. Let me save her. Where is she? Speak quickly. And a horrible fate, you said?"

As Agnes Thayer stood confronting her, the pale lips moved, and she murmured, as if to herself:

"If I was sure he loved her—but no, it will be the old, old story over again. And she is so fair, so innocent."

"You torture me," Agnes said. "My cousin is in the power of a villain; tell me where, how to rescue her! I will fly to the ends of the world."

"Robert Ashley has persuaded her to elope. His serpent's tongue could lure any woman to her doom. At nine this evening they leave for Dover, and will sail to-morrow for France. She thinks he will marry her, but I know him better. There may be a pretence, yet one day she will wake to a dreadful reality, and find herself spurned by the man she still loves. Oh, it is too bitter!" and the woman covered her face with her hands.

"How do you know this?" Agnes asked, huskily.

"I have not time tell you all. In your cousin's room you will find a note, lying under a fan, on a dressing-table. This will convince you of my truth."

Agnes opened the door leading to an adjoining apartment. She raised the fan—there lay a note addressed to Mrs. Chesterton.

"It is for my aunt," returned Agnes; "I must send for her at once. And now, where is my cousin? Every moment of our delay must be dangerous to her. I cannot endure the suspense."

She pressed her hands to her temples that were throbbing violently.

"There is a carriage waiting," the visitor said; "the one I came in. We will go when you are ready."

At this juncture Mrs. Chesterton entered, and Agnes handed her the note, explaining in her clear, brief manner the situation. But Mrs. Chesterton was too much bewildered to read, and returned it to Agnes, helplessly wringing her hands while the latter perused it.

It was fond, flippant, pathetic, and imploring. She loved Mr. Ashley, and he had persuaded her this would be the easiest way of settling all difficulties. Search would be useless; they were going on a pleasant bridal tour, and some day, when least expected, would drop in upon her dear auntie for forgiveness. Then followed some weak, childish pleading, messages for Agnes, and dear Ward, who would always be remembered as a darling cousin; and much fondness for the relative whose kind indulgence she was so cruelly outraging.

After the first shock was over, Mrs. Chesterton recovered her presence of mind, and was most active. Under the guidance of their guest, both ladies proceeded to the carriage; which rode rapidly away. The stranger replied briefly to Mrs. Chesterton's questions. Agnes had no heart for any. She divined at once that this unfortunate being had been a victim to Robert Ashley's wiles, and both sorrow and gratitude forbade her desiring to learn any more than the stranger seemed willing to communicate. She counted the moments of their journey. Each one seemed ages of agony to her as she thought of Ward Huntingdon.

The horses stopped, and they alighted. This route was valued mostly for its intersection with more prominent roads; its depot was small, and the platform dimly lighted. For a few moments the three consulted together, then the train was heard echoing in the distance. Agnes's heart beat chokingly. She grasped her aunt's arm in irrepressible terror. The locomotive shrieked through the darkness, and sent the light of the Cyclopean eye far in advance, then, as the bell rang, its speed slackened, and the passengers came out. They watched them closely. A tall gentleman and a lady well-muffled emerged from the doorway. The man cast one furtive glance around, and hurried his companion across the platform. Another arm encircled her, and a voice said, firmly:

"Flora, you cannot, shall not, leave me this way."

Flora Ellis uttered a low cry of dismay.

"How dare you detain this lady? We have not a moment to waste," and Robert Ashley would have

lifted her into the carriage, if Agnes had not added her grasp to her aunt's. Then Mrs. Chesterton spoke: "Mr. Ashley, if you intend to marry my niece, you can do it in a more honourable manner than stealing her away by night. Flora, child, you are my charge, remember this."

The whistle blew, the carriages began to take up their slow, snake-like motion at first, unconsciously growing more rapid, until only the echoes among the trees answered.

The party on the platform stood as if spell-bound. "Agnes Thayer," Mr. Ashley said, in a deep tone, "if this is your work, you shall rue it bitterly."

"It was not her work, Robert," and the stranger drew off her veil, meeting these haughty, angry eyes unflinchingly.

"You know what I said. I have kept my word. And as for you," she turned to Flora; "one night when I was young, loving and unsuspecting as you are now, I trusted him, and fled from my home and friends. For a while I thought myself his wife; but when he got tired of me, he proved easily that there existed no such bond. Be warned in time. He told me he had one legal wife living; he may tell you the same story some day."

She had uttered this almost in a breath, and now confronted him fearlessly.

Some power stronger than his own will, kept him from dashing her to the ground. Then he turned, saying, "Flora, do you believe this infamous lie? I swear before these witnesses, that I intend honourable marriage with you. Choose quickly which side you will espouse."

Flora was clinging to her aunt, sobbing hysterically. "Take me home," she replied, in a faint, frightened tone, shrinking away from him.

He ground his heel into the boards of the platform, as if he longed to crush them all, like so many worms.

"You are a weak, spiritless fool, Flora Ellis," he hissed out angrily. "As for you, madam," and he turned to the stranger, "there is a bitter account between us to settle."

"Not to night, Robert Ashley. I return with these ladies. You know where to find me to-morrow." They left him alone in his impenetrable rage. Agnes would fain have learned more of her cousin's preserver, but she parted with them at the hotel, her name still a secret. All their attention was now directed to Flora, who, finding herself once more safe in her own room, gave way to a violent fit of repentance, tears and confusion.

Agnes shrank at the revelation of so much duplicity. She tried hard not to despise Flora, for the sake of the man who still loved her. Long after midnight she finished her letter. After stating her plans, she said, "I must resign all charge of Flora. I have failed miserably. Do not blame me too severely when you hear all." For she could not rid herself of the belief that Ward would in some way hold her answerable for Flora's escapade.

As Flora opened the letter the next morning she clung to Agnes with frantic tears, and begged to know if her cousin had told him all.

"That is your confession, Flora," was the sad answer.

"Must I tell him everything, Agnes? After all, you know, I did no more than take the ride with him—Mr. Ashley, I mean. And I hate him now; I shall never, never love him again. Do you believe Ward will forgive me? He loves me so very much. Suppose I said I had been flirting with Mr. Ashley, and was bitterly sorry and repentant. Wouldn't it do as well? I hate to let him know how weak and wicked I have been."

For one moment Agnes Thayer turned her full, clear, indignant eyes upon her cousin, who covered under their glance. Could she, would she dare still to claim Ward Huntingdon's love? The truthful soul of Agnes blazed up fierce and strong. Then she came back a step and stooped pityingly to Flora, and said, in a husky voice:

"It is best to tell him all; he may forgive."

"I cannot give him up," moaned Flora, weakly. "Suppose you write and intercede for me, Agnes; tell him it was only a pleasant acquaintance at first, and that I was so young, so ignorant of the real temptation lurking under these careless gaieties; he depends so much on you, he will believe every word."

"No, don't ask that of me, Flora. If I speak at all, I must tell the whole truth. It is best for me to say nothing further about it. Trust him for yourself, dear. He is noble and generous."

Agnes felt relieved when the summons came from her father. Mrs. Chesterton began immediate preparations for a return to the city. Flora kept her room under plea of illness, but no whispers of her unfortunate attempt at an elopement were circulated. Mr. Ashley had given out that he was going to the continent, so his sudden disappearance created no surmises. Flora was passionately repentant, and Mrs.

Chesterton soon began to comfort her; but Agnes felt that it was not true sorrow, and sprang mostly from shame and disappointment, for in spite of her protestations, there was a strong undercurrent in Mr. Ashley's favour.

Agnes Thayer soon felt at home in her new life. Not that her woman's heart could witness such scenes of sorrow and suffering unmoved; many an hour it was wrung with the keenest anguish. But she knew she was useful. She thought of the mothers and sisters in distant homes, whose places she was in part trying to fill, and this gave her strength in the most trying hours. The touch of her cool, soft hand soothed like a charm; her low sweet voice that was never weak, even when it faltered most, comforted and strengthened. More than one rude voice declared Miss Thayer an angel, and those who were too high-bred or fastidious to express open admiration, followed her with eyes mutely eloquent.

Aunt Chesterton and Flora were not very prompt correspondents. Agnes gathered that Flora had made a partial confession and been forgiven. The subject was very painful to her, and she tried not to think of it, believing, or desiring to, that her cousin would grow wiser and more worthy of the man who loved her so tenderly.

The battle of Inkerman had been fought and won, but at a fearful cost of British life.

The father of Agnes, and Captain Huntingdon, were wounded and sent home.

"He wasn't well for several days before the battle," Doctor Thayer said of the captain, "but he was determined to lead his men, although so weak and feverish he could hardly keep in the saddle. His wound is not dangerous, but his delirium is terrible."

Captain Huntingdon was left to her care.

She fancied she had known anxiety before, but now her nerves never relaxed an instant. How like a dream these long, fearful days and nights appeared to her afterwards! All of life seemed changed to her; every thought, every feeling, becoming tenfold more intense. At last there was hope.

She did not stay her watchful care and attention. It was a dear pleasure now, when a faint smile thanked her. How many days he watched her moving about with that noiseless, perfect grace, and listened to the music of her pleasant voice! I am afraid he came to think her fairly beautiful at the last, although she had not improved a whit since the day she sat under the pines with Flora.

They had never reverted to old scenes. She longed to know how matters stood between him and Flora, but had no courage to ask. Sitting alone in the twilight one evening, he held her hand in silence for a long while, until, with a shy, embarrassed feeling, quite new to her, she rose to go.

"No," he said, resisting the movement; "I want a long talk with you. Did you know, Agnes, that I had given up Flora?"

Some strange power seemed to impel Agnes to lean over the bed and plead for her cousin, tenderly, eloquently.

"I know the whole story now, dearest. You were not to blame, neither is she worthy of your regard. I forgave her at first. I knew how young and beautiful she was, and that admiration would have a double charm for her, and fancied it only a girlish error. A month before the battle I went home to visit her, and, by dint of questioning, learned the whole disgraceful story, and found she was still tolerating Mr. Ashley. In a moment I saw the true Flora Ellis—weak, vain, deceitful and cowardly. My regard for her perished on the spot. And going back carefully, I found there were some green oases in the desert of my life, places another had made beautiful with her true, pure heart. And I love this other woman, Agnes, as I never loved Flora in all her enchanting beauty. Will she accept my heart?"

He drew down the crimson face and kissed it with rare tenderness, then made answer for her.

"I think you love me, Agnes. Go over the past, and see if you cannot find a place where friendship grew burdened with a strange pain. Yet you did your duty nobly by her; I honour you for it, and your silence, but I absolve you from all now. Only say you love me."

The flood-tide of a woman's perfect life swept over her. Encircled by each other's arms, all the world was shut out, and the new day of perfect love began for them both.

Captain Huntingdon's wife is neither beautiful nor crowned with girlish youth; yet few women are more admired by their friends, and none, perhaps, worshipped with a truer and fonder devotion by a husband.

A. M. D.

It is no use smiling at the superstitions of bygone ages, when we look to the records of our own times; for instance, one Edward Westwood, the well-known "caster of divinities," of Westminster Bridge-road, has just died, and we are informed that Westwood occupied

a small hut next to St. Thomas's Church, and his visitors were for the most part ladies of rank and fashion, who left their carriages for consultation with the "cunning man," and, by his own admission, often paid well. Since his death the flooring of his hut has been torn up in search of his treasure, but it could not be found.

THE OFFICIALS AT HOLSTEIN.—The officials of the Superior Court of Appeal for the whole of Holstein, in Glucksburg, have unanimously resolved to refuse to take the oath of allegiance to the new King of Denmark.

LORD COMBERMERE.—The tenants of Lord Combermere have celebrated his lordship's ninety-first birthday. The noble viscount has been in the British service for the long period of seventy-three years. A subscription was commenced for the purpose of erecting a memorial to his lordship, and about £600 was collected in the room.

THE KING OF GREECE.—King George of Athens is trying to play the rôle of citizen king. He goes about almost unattended, has had his throne in the Cathedral taken down, rebukes courtiers who wear gold lace, and has mounted his establishment on the most moderate scale. Greek Bonds have not risen in consequence; but these symptoms seem to show a ruler under good guidance and willing to be guided. He has refused the title of "King by the grace of God."

NEW RAILWAY VIADUCT.—The new railway viaduct now erecting across the Thames a little below Southwark Bridge is to be similar in all respects of architectural character, to that nearly completed at Hungerford for the Charing Cross Railway Company. These bridges will bear trains on their way to and from the City terminus in Cannon Street, and afford means for the rapid transit of passengers from Charing Cross to the city and vice versa. Five minutes is said to be the time proposed for either of these journeys.

A PRUSSIAN DUEL.—A few days ago, a duel took place in the Junfruhauide, just outside the walls of Berlin. The combatants were a student and a military officer. The weapons were pistols. The first ball fired by the officer broke the student's thigh bone. He now lies in a dangerous state, and indeed is not expected to recover. The cause of offence was, that at a promenade concert the officer, in passing by the student, accidentally knocked his cigar out of his mouth, and not apologising instantly, was at once challenged by the offended youth.

FEARFUL OF THE RUSSIAN WILD HORSE.—In the steppes of Russia, it is not rare to see a two-year-old colt rush out singly to attack a band of four or five wolves, kill one or two of them, lame the rest, and spread the terror of his name throughout the country. The wild horse strikes with his fore feet, like the stag, and not with his hind legs, as popularly believed. He draws himself up to his full height against his enemy, and pounds him beneath his murderous pestles; then seizes him between the shoulders with his formidable incisors, and tosses him to his mares, to make sport for themselves and their offspring.

BLACK DRESS COATS.—The young elegants of the Parisian saloons, during last season, agitated the question of the eternal black dress-coat in which every gentleman not wearing uniform is expected to appear at evening entertainments, and argued that as so much latitude in the matter of colours was allowed to the ladies, a ball-room or saloon would present a more harmonious appearance if the dreary and mournful garb assigned to gentlemen, when present at balls or parties, were a little modified. Active measures appear to have been now taken, and an innovation has been already made by the adoption of coloured suits. It is further stated that, during the season about to commence at Paris, but few black coats will be seen, but that blue and green will be the prevailing colours, and besides these *prune de Monsieur* has its admirers. Black will, however, still be worn at state dinners, funerals, and in the boxes of the theatres.

KING OF THE HELLENES.—The Athenians are becoming daily more and more pleased with their young king. They are surprised at the simple, modest, and really antique life he leads. He walks through the streets alone on foot, or with one of his young Danish friends, saluting all, stopping to converse with people, visiting the vegetable market, inquiring the prices of articles exposed for sale, &c. King Otho, on the contrary, never went out but with the greatest solemnity. King George attends the national divine service on Sundays. All the promotions made in the army since the revolution have been abolished by the National Assembly. In an army of 4,000 men, in one day, not less than 300 sub-lieutenants were appointed. The lieutenants made themselves colonels, and Heuffon, a simple writer, has become general-in-chief. The Government has just given a mark of confidence to the inhabitants. It has replaced the English and French sailors who guarded the bank by a body of 20 gendarmes.



THE GREAT FIRE AT LISBON.

THE greatest fire that has taken place in the capital of Portugal, for many years, has recently literally gutted the Bank, the Municipal Chambers, the Fidelity Insurance office, the offices of Tobacco Contract, and the adjacent shops and houses, to the number of about fifty.

The fire was first observed about nine at night in rooms added to the Town Hall, on the second floor, over those occupied by the offices of the Fidelity Insurance Company. It spread within two to three hours to the east corner of the block of houses, destroying the whole of the Municipal Chambers or Town Hall, whilst with equal rapidity it extended west to the Pelourinho Square, consuming the office and all the books and papers of the Tobacco Contract, and the two upper floors of the Bank of Portugal. The books and valuables, however, being always kept in the two lower floors, which are vaulted, and the strong room having resisted the flames which encircled it, nothing of importance was lost by the bank, which soon resumed its business in those two lower floors and part of the neighbouring department of Public Credit, placed at its disposal by the Marquis of Loulé.

The north façade of the block of buildings subjected to this conflagration, and more than half the adjoining residences, which are in flats, are quite destroyed; the upper two or three floors being generally the sufferers, while the shops and first floors escaped. The same result is observed in the east façade, where several houses were destroyed because no engine could be obtained, and, when obtained, it was, of course, nearly useless.

In fact, the fire seemed to have all its own way in the block (called *quartiram*) of buildings where it commenced, notwithstanding the party walls between each of the numerous houses forming the block. There was no want of exertion on the part of the fire brigade and authorities; but the preventive means at their disposal were absurd, the engines being served by water-carriers' barrels and carts, while the Tagus was running at about 300 yards distance. A floating steam-engine, with ample hose, might have filled the whole block of houses with water, if such had been necessary, to check the fire before it got the mastery. Such an engine, often called for upon each new fire, would be generally efficacious, since the principal part of Lisbon is built along the banks of the river.

It is not easy to estimate the amount of property destroyed, but it is considered the buildings alone

will require £200,000 to restore them. A great deal of furniture has also been destroyed, the occupants of houses and offices at the west and north sides of the block anticipating the fire would be subdued before it reached them.

The Fidelity Insurance Company is among the largest losers, from the policies it had running, though its own books and papers are saved.

NADAR'S GREAT BALLOON.

THE "Géant," now at the Crystal Palace, is by far the largest balloon ever yet made. Its entire height, including the "compensator"—a small balloon under the large one, containing a reserve of condensed gas—and the car, is close upon 200 feet, and when fully inflated it will contain 215,363 cubic feet of gas.

For greater security it has two skins, both of white silk—the outer coloured a yellowish white—of the finest quality, and of which more than 200,000 yards were consumed in the manufacture. All the gores are entirely hand-sewn, and the work occupied 300 men and women for more than a month. Perhaps we shall give the best idea of its magnitude to English readers, by saying that it could not be got into one of Captain Powke's great domes.

It is easy to understand how hard it must be to control this enormous body of gas so as to manage a safe descent; and novices in aeronautics may be permitted to doubt whether, until the valve machinery is improved, safe voyages can be performed by balloons of such a size. M. Nadar himself, attributes the unfortunate issue of his last trip more to the deficiencies of the valves, which did not permit the gas to escape with sufficient rapidity, than to the failure of the anchors. The "Géant" is calculated to lift 4½ tons.

The car is a great curiosity in its way. In its outside appearance it is not unlike, on a small scale, one of the caravans to be met with by the side of a gipsy encampment. It is about 15 feet long, by 12 wide, and is partitioned off into a captain's cabin with sleeping-berth, four small cabins with berth, washing-room, and printing and photographic operating rooms. It is fitted with wheels on moveable axles, so that there may be no difficulty in the return, supposing a descent to be effected far from the ordinary means of transport. There are windows and doors on each side; but, after all, there does not seem much room for nine people to turn-in comfortably. For those who prefer the open air there is the roof, with which a strong high bulwark running round makes a kind of airy terrace or quarter-deck.

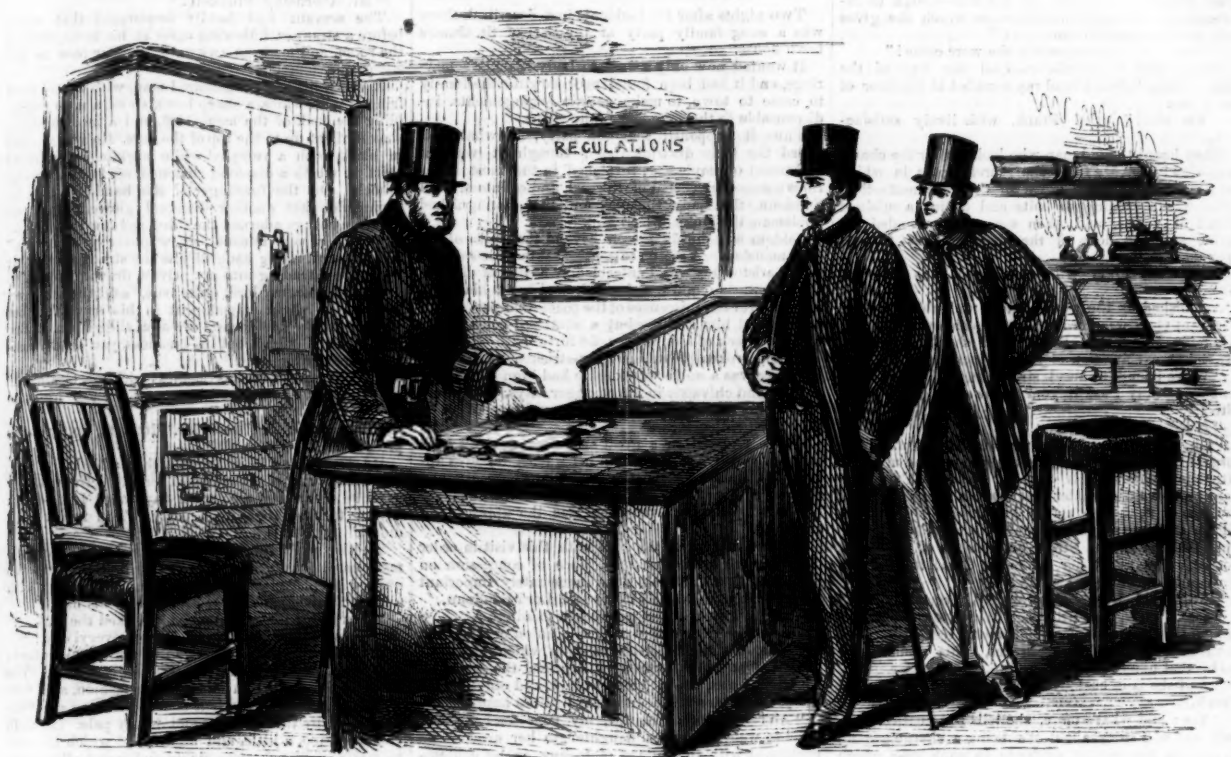
GARIBALDI'S DESCENT FROM ASPROMONTE.—The picture of the last Milan Exhibition, "Garibaldi Descending from Aspromonte," has been bought at a fabulous price by some unknown friend of the General, who made him a present of it.

CURIOS FREAK OF LIGHTNING.—The lightning a few days ago produced a curious effect upon the Church of St. Aphrodise, in the town of Beziers, in the South of France. It struck the roof and went through it. No great damage was done to the roof; but it lit all the wax-candles placed in the choir, and at the altar; and when the attendant at the church opened it in the morning, he found all the candles at the altar lighted just as they are when grand mass is celebrated.

THE FRENCH EMPRESS.—The costume worn by the Empress Eugénie at the dinner given in honour of her *site* was thought by some rather too light and dressy, but was eminently becoming. A skirt of spangled muslin, full in puffs from the waist to the hem, was confined by broad bands of emerald velvet decreasing in width towards the waist. A lovely Polish toque of green velvet, encircled by a border of the finest marabout trimming, with diamond aigrette, formed the most charming and becoming coiffure ever beheld.

MRS. JEFF. DAVIS, the wife of the President, dresses very plainly, and usually walks when she goes out. When she does ride it is in a plain carriage, drawn by two horses and driven by a negro, who is by far the most consequential personage of the two. She has had many rich dresses and some superb articles of jewellery sent to her by the friends of Jeff. Davis in Europe, but these she seldom wears, except upon state occasions. She very rarely goes to places of amusement, but is always seen with her husband at church. The latter has been for more than a year a devout Episcopalian, and his friends say a sincere Christian.

ACCIDENT TO MRS. KEAN.—The Champion of the Seas, the vessel Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean sailed in for Melbourne, met with very severe weather off the Cape of Good Hope. During one of these storms the ship was so tossed about, that several accidents were the result; amongst others, Mrs. Charles Kean was dashed so roughly from one side of her cabin to the other, that she received an injury to one of her knees, so serious as to render it probable that it will be very long, if ever, before she can recover from its effects. She was greatly cheered up, however, after an eighty days' voyage, to land amidst the warm greetings that met her and Mr. Kean on all sides.



[SERGEANT GOSS SHOWS MEREDITH THE PAPERS FOUND ON LOTTY.]

MAN AND HIS IDOL.

CHAPTER LXXII

IN SEARCH OF WEAPONS.

Law by harsh evidence
Thrown from its eminence,
Seeming estranged.

Thomas Hood.

It was her voice.

Kingston Meredith did not dream. The music which vibrated in his ears in the old house in Endle's Rents was the voice of the woman who had once been prized beyond every treasure upon earth.

His natural impulse was to rush down the creaking stairs and meet her face to face.

But he restrained his feelings.

"No," he muttered, clenching his hands fiercely, "when Blanche and I next meet it must be as equals."

So he hung back for an instant, heard the sweet voice utter a faint "good-night;" and then, when all was silent, made his way down into the little post-office shop.

Mrs. Stott, looking up as he descended, noticed that his face was deadly white, and that his eyes had a strangely eager look.

"A lady has just left this shop?" he said.

"It's true, sir; as perfect a lady as I ever clapped eyes on," answered the woman.

"Would you tell me what she came here for?"

"Oh, there's no objection as to that," replied Mrs. Stott, "which it's one of the most singular things, though I say it, as have happened this many a day. It was the very night that Emmy and I sat up for her poor father, the time he went off, nobody knows where, that as I was a-sortin' the letters, I came to one wrote in a beautiful clear hand, with 'H. H., till called for.' on it."

"H. H.!" cried Meredith. "Yes, and what then?"

"There'd been a good many letters like that, just about that time, and they used to be fetched, sometimes by a beautiful young woman—the very one as have just gone out—and sometimes by a sassy feller of a groom, drat him! I think I see his imperent face now—that I do."

"A groom!" ejaculated the young man.

"Yes; but when I told the young woman that, she was so skeered and so all of a tremble, and on that she says to me, 'ma'am, she says—she was always a civil spoken body—'if there's any more in that name,' she says, 'only let me look at 'em afore you give 'em up, and I'll be that grateful, no tongue can tell.' Well, I couldn't say no; and when I come to this 'H. H. I

put it aside in my best tea-caddy—that as stands on the back-gamming board there, which it was Stott's delight in the winter time—and says I, 'she'll be here in a day or two, I've not a doubt.' But believe me, or believe me not, she never came again; and what with business, and worrit of one sort and another, I never set eyes on the letter till this very night, when in she walks, as white as a ghost, and asks for the letter as if it came but yesterday."

Kingston Meredith was strangely moved at this simple and rambling narrative.

"You will hear from me again," he said hastily, addressing Mrs. Stott and Sergeant Goss, "and let me caution you, above all things, not to part with the books of which you have spoken as belonging to your late lodger until you have legal authority to deliver them up."

"She ain't very likely to," said Sergeant Goss. "I'll take care of that."

With this assurance, Meredith left.

His excitement was intense.

Since his arrival in England he had heard that the Lady Blanche had recovered greatly from her illness; but he had no idea that she was in London.

And as to the letter—his own letter—written months and months ago, in the old time when they corresponded daily; why, he asked himself, should she never have troubled herself to obtain it before; and, most singular of all, why should she now seek out the little post-office and apply for it?

There was but one solution of the mystery.

The communication he had received from Lotty, in Paris—a strange, ill-worded, vindictive letter—had assured him, on the faith of the writer, to whom he was, it was stated, well-known, that the Lady Blanche really and truly loved him, and was only herself the victim of

Slanderous tongues which poison truth.

Might it not be possible, was it not indeed probable, that this singular, illiterate woman, whoever she was, might have given Blanche the same assurance, and so have induced her to seek proof of the assertion in any stray letter which she might before have scorned to apply for?

Half-persuading himself that this was so, Meredith strode on rapidly through the streets on his way to his chambers in Lincoln's-inn, where he had appointed to meet Frank Hildred, that he might hear the result of inquiries which he had written from Paris to request his friend to make.

Absorbed in thought, he hardly noticed an incident which had attracted a crowd at the bottom of Carey-street. It struck him as only an ordinary street row,

and if from a casual glance he gathered anything, it was that a woman had been charged by a gentleman with picking his pocket.

An ordinary incident that, in London streets, so he gave no heed to it, and, relapsing into thought, hurried forward.

Frank Hildred had arrived, and was pacing the room with impatience.

"Ah, my dear King," he said, extending both hands; "I am so glad you are come. She will be here directly."

"She! Not Blanche?"

"No, no, the woman, Lotty. She is in possession of facts of the utmost moment. Her story is like a romance, and she has papers which—But I will not raise your hopes too high. You will see her, hear her communication, and see what these papers mean. Nine o'clock! She should be here."

A bright fire was blazing on the hearth, and lit up the great chamber pleasantly enough, that dull November night. The friends sat, one on either side, as they had done in bygone days, and it was impossible but that, doing so, their thoughts should revert to the past, and to the strange occurrences which had filled up the interval since they last sat together in that room.

Of these, not the least strange was the event of that night, and Meredith could not banish the thought of it from his mind. On his part, Frank Hildred reverted to that passage of his life in which Flora Angerstein had so coldly repulsed him, and which had altered the whole course of his being.

He had lost his exuberant spirits, his ready wit—all the buoyancy which had distinguished him. In a word, he was an altered man.

Ten, eleven o'clock came and went, and the young men still occupied their respective seats, and there was no appearance of Lotty.

"This woman is deceiving us," said Meredith; "we have been fooled by her for some purpose of her own."

"No," said Hildred, promptly; "I cannot believe it. Her manner was earnest beyond description; what she told me she must have believed. Deception could not approach so near to truth."

"But who is she?" asked Meredith; "she has no character of which to boast, no friend to whom to appeal—why should we waste a thought upon her?"

"Because she knows, evidently knows, more than she has told. Her letter to you assures you of Blanche's firm, unalterable truth—"

"It does, and this very night I have received confirmation of it."

CHAPTER LXXIII

There's power in me and will to dominate
Which I must exercise. *Browning.*

"Well, then, she asserts the mercenary object of of Sandoun, of which you have very good evidence, and warns us against the perfidy of that snake in the grass, Captain Allardye. Is not this enough to induce us to trust her in matters on which she gives only her unsupported assertion?"

"True. At any rate would she were come!"

Hardly had the words escaped the lips of the young man, before a loud rap sounded at the door of the house.

"Tis she!" cried Frank, with lively satisfaction.

They heard the old man who looked after the chambers slowly emerge from the secret depths in which he dwelt—somewhere down in the basement—then there was a rattling of bolts and chains, a subdued sound of voices, and then some one ascended the stairs, and the door of the chamber was thrown open.

It was not Lotty who entered—it was Sergeant Goss.

Astonished as the young men undoubtedly were, Sergeant Goss was hardly less so as his eyes fell upon Kingston Meredith. He stopped short, stared, and uttered an exclamation of intense incredulity.

"We're bound to meet, sir, it seems," he said, at length. "May I ask if your name's Kingston Meredith?"

"It is," was the answer.

"Oh, oh, I see, and his name was Kingston." The sergeant, you see, was trying to piece out the mystery after the fashion of his class. "Well, sir, I've come here about a little matter that seems a bit queerish on the face of it, though maybe you'll be able to put it all fair and square. The fact is, sir, there's a woman in the cells at Lower Street on a charge of picking a pocket. She gives her name as Charlotte Priddis. Do you know of such a name?"

"No," said Kingston, promptly, "certainly not." "Stay," interposed Hildred. "Charlotte would be the name of the woman who calls herself 'Lotty.'"

"Right, sir," cried the sergeant, "this woman does go by that name."

"And she is in custody for pocket-picking?" asked Frank.

"Yes; and what's more, she tells me a cock-and-a-bull sort of a story, about it's being a charge got up to prevent her giving evidence in some case, which she says your friend here's interested in. She's told me so much, in fact, that I've been persuaded to come here, at her wish, to ask him whether, in case of a remand, he'll go bail for her appearance in a week's time!"

"Really!" said Kingston, "this is singular conduct. A pickpocket asking me for bail! I begin to have my doubts whether even you have not been made a fool of, for some purpose. What do you say, Hildred?"

"Who is the accuser?" asked Frank, abruptly, and without answering the question put to him.

"His name is Angerstein," said the officer.

"Indeed! The girl is right then," was his answer. "It is not a robbery: it is a conspiracy."

Kingston looked on incredulously.

"Two words will explain all," said Frank. "There is a cunning, dangerous woman, as I know to my cost, now staying at Redruth House. The rumour is that she is about to be married to Captain Allardye. The girl, Lotty, herself told me that, and it is not a piece of information, which, for certain reasons"—his voice faltered, but he had never confided, even to Kingston, his love-passage with Flora Angerstein, and he did not now—"I say, it was information that I was not likely to forget. Now, I happen to know that it is of all things desirable to Allardye that he should keep this girl and yourself apart. What is more probable then, than that finding her in the very neighbourhood of your chambers, her own brother, a desperate character, as I know, should have vamped up a charge, so easily made, but so difficult to dispose of, in order, at all events, to gain time? Have you forgotten that the marriage takes place within a week?"

"This may be so," cried Meredith.

"It's very like the gal's own statement, sir," said Sergeant Goss; "but what brought me here more than anything else is, that when she was searched, we found, stitched inside her stays, two queer-looking documents; and in one of 'em there was the name of the man as used to live with Mrs. Stott, in Endle's Rents, and the same that the Earl of St. Omer is suspected to have murdered. There was the very name."

"Daniel Kingston's name on papers in Lotty's possession?" cried Meredith. "This must be seen to. You have done right in coming here, sergeant; if this night's work turns out as it may do, your fortune is made. Come, let us go to Lower Street at once. Frank, my boy, it would be glorious to fight these villains with their own weapons!"

In a few minutes the three persons were rattling off in a cab toward the Lower Street police station.

Two nights after the incidents just described, there was a snug family party at the Earl of St. Omer's town house.

It wanted now only a week to Lady Blanche's marriage, and it had been found necessary for the family to come to town, to make certain arrangements, indispensable to the grandeur of the event.

Thus it happened that the party, in what was called the little drawing-room, though it was an apartment of ample size, furnished in the most luxurious manner, consisted of the earl and countess, Lord Sandoun, the Lady Blanche, and that distinguished nobleman, the Duke of Hereford.

Seldom was the duke seen beyond the walls of his own mansion. A victim to gout—that terrible scourge of the aristocracy—and enfeebled by a life of dissipation, he was a confirmed invalid, and spent his days in mournful reminiscences of the past—that past which had yielded him nothing but a shattered constitution and the wreck of a once splendid fortune.

Aged, broken down, poverty-stricken as he was, the duke was a noble wreck. He had been handsome, courtly and chivalric in his younger days, and there still lingered about him the air and aspect of a polished gentleman.

As he reclined in a great arm-chair, covered with crimson velvet, against which his wasted features appeared in startling relief, he commanded respect and deference.

The subject of conversation was the approaching marriage.

He had honoured the earl with this visit in order that they might discuss it; a piece of concession on his part which showed how immediately important it was to him, as well as to his son, Lord Sandoun.

This, however, he did not choose to admit.

The old courtier spoke of it as a union of affection, and one of those delightful cases in which, like some shepherd and shepherdess of Arcadia, the youthful couple had met, doated on each other, and only desired the paternal blessing to secure their life's happiness.

"Ah! would that Bertha, my poor duchess, had lived to welcome such a daughter to her arms!" he exclaimed with an outburst of feeling, as he contemplated Blanche.

People did say that Bertha, the unhappy duchess, had died of a broken heart, the result of the duke's cruelty; but, of course, no one mentioned it, and it was not likely to be alluded to at that moment.

"She will be like sunshine to you in the old castle!" said the earl; "and we—I know not how we shall bear her loss!"

The countess instinctively put her arm about her fair daughter's waist, and drew her towards her.

Deeply, tenderly did she love the fair girl; not as she loved Mark, perhaps—he was the first-born, and his very waywardness seemed to endear him to her all the more—but there was a deep well-spring of affection in her heart toward Blanche also.

"I fully appreciate the sacrifice you are making on my son's behalf," said the duke, in his bland, courtly fashion; "and I assure you I am not ungrateful for it. The only happiness of my declining years is to think that I may live—please God, I shall now live—to see Archy settled, and his comfort secured by an alliance which to me is unexceptionable."

The duke did not mean to lie.

I will not believe that, standing as he did upon the verge of the grave, tottering to the inevitable fall, that the old man wilfully polluted his soul by these untruths.

No, no; let us lay it to the account of the school in which he had been reared. Taught from his youth to use the language of compliment and adulation, brought up in the atmosphere of a court, in which truth inevitably sickens and dies, he had lost the very power of giving utterance to his own just, unbiassed convictions. Sophistry was as natural to him as the air he breathed. Bold, straightforward plain-speaking was for him, as it is to most of his class, a lost art.

So, though he knew that his hopes for Archy had pointed higher, and though he was aware that the shadow which rested on St. Omer's fair fame made this alliance objectionable, he spoke as we have heard.

The earl bowed.

Sandoun, staring into the glass upon the mantelpiece, minutely examined the parting down the middle of his head. It was growing thin, and that troubled him.

The countess slowly released her hold of Blanche's waist, and observed, with anxiety, that though looking better, much better, than she had done for months, she was absent and apparently ill at ease.

Presently a servant entered.

Blanche looked up anxiously; but as her eyes met

no response from those of the man who approached the group about the fire, she sighed and relapsed into indifference.

"Mr. Abernethy Plunkett!"

The servant had hardly announced that name, before a stranger, following close at his heels, entered the room, and made an awkward, circular bow to the company assembled.

It was a little, fresh-coloured man, with a bald head fringed with white, a sharp hawk's eye, a nose resembling the beak of the same bird, and a face smoothly shaved right up to the top of the ears. He was dressed in black, with a rumpled white necktie, and a frilled shirt, in which a diamond glistened, set in a mourning brooch. On the forefinger of the hand in which he swung his hat another diamond glowed, and two mourning rings adorned the third and fourth fingers.

"This is very unusual, sir, whoever you may be," said the earl, rising haughtily as the stranger entered; "you are intruding into my private drawing-room."

"Quite true, my lord, quite true," said the stranger, who had a slight impediment in his speech; "but lawyers like doo-doctors are a privileged class. Beg-pardon if I offend, but his-business, you know, business is par-paramount."

"If this gentleman has business with me, Grainger," said the earl, turning to his servant, "show him into the library."

"Just as you like," said Mr. Plunkett, "only time's pre-precious. That's all."

He stopped and looked round, then added: "The Duke of Hereford, I think? How is your grace? Your son, too; upon my word, I did-didn't expect to find so snug a party. 'Pon my word I didn't."

To the earl's surprise, his grace shook the little man cordially by the hand; Lord Sandoun also quitted his place before the glass, and, advancing with a faint "how do, Plunkett?" held out his hand.

"You know these gentlemen?" asked the earl.

"Know 'em? Ra-rather! Know every body!"

It did not seem as if the gentleman's acquaintance was the source of much pleasure to everybody. The duke looked about him in a nervous fashion, as if contemplating some convenient means of escape, and Sandoun was, by turns, scarlet and deadly pale. His teeth chattered, too, a little, and an attempt which he made to smile at Blanche was sickly and spasmodic in the extreme.

In fact, both expected a revelation.

They dreaded lest on the very eve of the marriage, which was of such paramount importance to both, this wretched little imp should have come there to make disclosures which would ruin them.

"Duke your friend?" asked Plunkett, intimating his grace with a thumb; "all right! Son-in-law, too? I know. Any se-secrets from 'em?"

"If you have anything to communicate to me, sir," said the earl, "I must request you to step this way."

"As you like, only I don't see why. They'll know it ten minutes after. All the co-country 'll know it to-morrow morning."

"What?"

"Im-important facts turned up. Real Earl of St. Omer come to light. Proofs, sir, proofs—ma-rather abrupt, 'praps; but clear as day-daylight."

The earl changed colour at these words. Lady St. Omer, too, half-rose. As to the rest, they were overwhelmed with amazement.

"What you are saying, sir, is of the very gravest importance," said the earl, trying to assume a calmness utterly foreign to his nature, "and I know not which to resent most—your audacity or your want of delicacy."

Plunkett smiled.

"My way, my lord; no offence meant, only my way. That's all. Hate to be beating about the bush to no purpose. What I say proves no-nothing. Only tell you our case. We claim the earldom, Redruth, and the rest of it. It's for you to show a be-better claim."

"We," said the earl, earnestly; "and who are 'we'?"

"Meaning my client," said Plunkett.

"And his name is?"

The man fixed his eye on the group, to watch the effect of his answer.

"Mr. Kingston Meredith?"

"Kingston Meredith!" echoed the earl and countess. Blanche started up, with a half-suppressed cry, and rushed into her father's arms.

The earl stepped back two paces, but did not utter a word.

As for his grace, he fixed on Lord Sandoun a look of utter dismay.

It was the countess, who, in this crisis, had not lost her presence of mind. Advancing, she said:

"This is absurd; what you are stating is purely nothing more. Or, if there is more in it, you will oblige the earl by communicating with his solicitors upon the subject."

Her manner would have awed another man: it had no effect whatever on Mr. Plunkett. He was an original. He prided himself on conducting his practice as a lawyer on the same principle that his great namesake had acted as a physician. Of course, he modified his tone according to circumstances; but he delighted in bold, sharp, practical effects, and this was a case in which he felt that he could act as he pleased.

The countenances of those present convinced him that he was right. So, with a bow to the countess, he said:

"I've done. Stated my case. You'll receive the doc-documents in the morning. Thought it more court-courteous to come round and prepare you for 'em. Good-night!"

The Duke of Hereford stopped him.

"Stay, Plunkett," he said, "it's not the first time you and I have met—"

"Not quite," cried the lawyer, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"And, perhaps," pursued his grace, "as that is the case, the earl will allow me to ask you to state the grounds on which you have made this extraordinary claim?"

The earl hesitated.

"I can have no objection to that," he said, at length; "but your grace will recollect that this is not the first claimant to my title and property; and it is a little too much that one is to be continually annoyed by these absurd outbreaks of folly."

"True," said his grace, "but from the peculiar position Mr. Plunkett holds in his profession, I confess I should like—"

"Let him speak," interrupted the earl. "I am content. I have nothing to conceal, and, as I verily believe, nothing to fear from any disclosures. That this gentleman's conduct is unprofessional, you will admit? Well, then, I've no more to say."

Plunkett thereupon spoke.

He stated that Mr. Kingston Meredith had that day applied to him to act in his behalf, in consequence of some remarkable information which had come to his knowledge, and which justified him in the belief that he was the son of Rupert, Earl of St. Omer, by his first marriage.

"There was no marriage," interrupted the earl impatiently.

"Pardon me," said the lawyer.

"At all events, it was without issue," said the earl.

"Was it? We shall see," replied the lawyer; then he added, "you don't like this blunt way of mine, my lord. I know it, and I feel I owe you an apology for it. But the fact is, that I hap-happened to know that his grace here—a client of mine, I'm proud to say"—he bowed to the duke, who didn't seem at all proud in return; "and his son, my lord here, another client of mine;" and he bowed again, "were spending a quiet hour with your lordship. Now, as my client has no case to make out—it's all made for him by documents—and so had nothing to lose by abruptness, and as the only thing he had to gain was the putting off of the marriage between this young couple; and as that was not at all likely to break their hearts—you see I know all about it—I thought it best to throw in our claim like a bomb-shell, and so put an end to all further mis-mischief!"

The lawyer's own smile was the best to express the consternation he had caused.

No bomb-shell thrown amidst the quiet party in that gorgeous apartment could have exploded with more startling effect.

Vague rumours had reached the earl as affecting his security; but Meredith's claim was utterly incredible. As to the countess, she had scorned the idea of any man presuming to oust the earl from his possessions. Poor Blanche heard the words as one might hear them in a dream, knowing their import, yet failing to realise it to her mind. For the duke and his son, they were aghast; they knew Plunkett of old. They knew him too well to doubt that he had good grounds on which to make this revelation. They knew also that, with all his bluntness, he would not have spoken as he had, but from his intimate knowledge of their positions and their objects.

They were right.

"What need," the man had argued with himself, "to mince matters with a man who retains possession of property to which he has no right, and to beggars, whose only object is to rob the robber of his ill-gotten gains?"

While he had spoken, Plunkett had drawn out his pocket-book.

"You will favour me with the name of your solicitors?" he asked.

The earl gave the address of Messrs. Tullett and Tullett, and, while he hesitated in what manner to proceed next, the lawyer made his circular bow again, wished everybody "good-night" and was gone.

The impression his going produced was like that of the vanishing of a phantom.

It seemed incredible that such an apparition could

have been there, could have spoken words of such potent meaning, and was gone!

The duke was the first to break the awkward silence.

"This is serious," he said, "Plunkett's no fool!"

"But he can only speak as his client instructs him," said the earl. "You surely do not attach any importance to his unsupported words?"

"I should not," was the duke's reply, "did I not know the man. He would never have spoken out so boldly and so uncompromisingly, had he not a strong case, and a perfect knowledge of the relations of those he was addressing. He knew well enough in what position my son stood to your lady daughter, and it was an act of kindness on his part—rough and unpolished as his manner undoubtedly is—to throw out a warning hint to us before it was too late, and we had compromised ourselves inextricably."

"You mean," said the countess, interposing, "that your views of this 'unexceptionable alliance' have been altered by the idle charges in which this man has indulged. Is not that so?"

"In effect—yes," answered the duke.

"And, may I ask, was this some creature—some toady of yours, who has outraged all the deonities of life, by coming here to warn you against a false step?"

"No," said the duke, hastily; "he has, nevertheless, given us a hint which we cannot afford to neglect."

"True, true," remarked Lady St. Omer, "and we have no right to complain. Is it not so?" she said, turning to the earl, who stood absorbed in thought.

"The duke has stripped our position of its romance in an instant. He has entered into a mercenary bargain with us. We have given our daughter, and something more, as against the honour of an alliance with his family. Calamity threatens us; we may be unable to fulfil our side of the bargain, and, like a prudent trader, he cries 'off.' Quite right, quite right."

Yet her ladyship's tone was very bitter.

The first touch of the sharp thorn of adversity is hard to endure, and though she knew that what she had stated was the bare, hard fact of the relation between the Duke of Hereford and themselves, she was not prepared to be shown it so abruptly.

Sandoun perceived this.

He was himself unable to realize the desperate position in which the earl's beggary would place him, and so still doubted Plunkett's statement.

"At least, my lord," he said, "matters will remain in their present position until we know the worst. I trust so?"

He glanced at the Lady Blanche as he spoke; but she did not heed him. Her eyes were fixed upon the face of the earl, her father, which exhibited traces of the deepest mental agony. The events of the last few months had, as we know, greatly aged and shaken him; but this seemed the crowning blow, and against it all the strength of his nature was needed to enable him to struggle. The earl's manifest anguish went to her heart, and perhaps at that moment she suffered the more from a secret feeling that she could not sympathize with him as she ought. But how could she altogether forget that this good fortune had befallen the man whom she so fondly loved?

The awkward silence which followed Sandoun's remark, was broken by an equally awkward interruption.

The door was thrown suddenly open, and Mark Allardye rushed into the drawing-room, evidently the worse for liquor, as his red eyes and flushed cheeks fully testified.

He had, in fact, taken to hard-drinking of late, to drive away the terrors that haunted him.

"Who was the beggar I met in the hall?" he asked, abruptly.

"It was Kingston Meredith's solicitor," said Sandoun, pointedly.

"What! Meredith! Isn't he settled yet?" cried Mark, with a look of alarm.

"No," said Sandoun, "he is mad, I think. What do you suppose he's done now? After trying to decoy Blanche here into his power, and showing his animosity by backing up the wretched idiot who claimed Redruth, he's trumped up a claim of his own, now, and nothing will suit him but he must be Earl of St. Omer!"

At those words Mark reeled, not from intoxication, but terror.

"They've met!" he cried.

"They? who?" asked the earl.

"No matter. I will see to this."

"You!" cried the duke. "I fear it is too late for your interference, Captain Allardye; you don't know Plunkett as well as I do. When he speaks out as he has spoken to-night, he means mischief. By-the-way, will you ring for my carriage?"

"With pleasure," said Mark, with a sneer. "As to Plunkett, he's a brute, and clever as he is, he can't make a case out of nothing. But let him and his client take care. They're playing a desperate game;

but two can take part in that. I know their case, and I defy them to prove it. As sure as they live they will break down, and so sure as they do, I will indict them for conspiracy, and transport the lot of them."

He was fierce, excited, desperate.

It was evident that he blustered only to keep up his own sinking courage, and Sandoun was not surprised when, as he attended the duke to his carriage, Mark drew him aside, and whispered in his ear:

"For God's sake keep the duke up to this marriage!" he whispered; "it *must* come off, we *must* have that money, or you and I'll have to run for it. The case is desperate; but we *must* stave off the mischief for a week. Only for a week!"

CHAPTER LXXIV.

OUTWITTED.

Evil from evil—'tis the law: and crime
Yields but the fruits of crime, and blood
Will still have blood.

ANON.

THADDEUS ANGERSTEIN, was only carrying out his sister's orders when he charged Lotty with picking his pocket in Carey Street.

He had received a letter to this effect:

"My friend, Mark, is in the greatest trouble. You must help him out of it. The woman called Lotty—you remember my speaking of her?—has possession of important information. How acquired, I know not. She has placed herself in communication with Kingston Meredith and his friend Hildred. Both are in London, doubtless at the former's chambers in Lincoln's Inn. I have just heard that the woman has also left for London suddenly. No doubt she will call on them, if possible. You must prevent this in some way: watch her, invent some charge and have her taken into custody. One point, is to gain time; in a week, the marriage takes place, and Mark gets money from Sandoun. You understand? But there is a more important issue, and as the woman's character is doubtful, it would render her almost harmless if she could be convicted of a criminal offence. Now take this hint for your guidance: there are papers in her possession, certificates. They may be upon her. Make a general charge of robbery, and include in it any paper of the kind she may have about her. Mark and half-a-dozen others will swear to them as yours."

This cunning arrangement was carried out.

Thaddeus set himself to watch for Lotty, of whom he had already received a minute description; and on the evening we have mentioned he saw her enter a pastry-cook's in Chancery Lane. Immediately he sauntered in, bought a bun, saw that she had a cup of coffee, and was waiting for the time to pass, as she kept looking up at the clock. Thereupon he contrived to draw near, and to get into conversation.

Lotty, though unusually serious that night, was a merry, light-hearted girl, who liked company, and the two were very soon engaged in conversation. But she did not forget to note the time; and at length rose suddenly; paid for her coffee, and left the shop. Watching her, he saw that outside she drew a paper from her glove and examined it by the lights in the shop-window. Evidently she was refreshing her memory as to an address.

Directly she moved off, Angerstein thrust his hand into his pocket, uttered an exclamation of alarm, and said:

"She's robbed me! My purse is gone!"

"Indeed, sir! She did go in a great hurry," said the shopwoman.

"Keep that for me," said Thaddeus, tearing off his signet ring and throwing it down, as a guarantee for what he had taken. "I must go after her."

And he left the shop.

The crowd which Kingston Meredith saw at the corner of Carey Street was occasioned by the charge which he preferred against Lotty on overtaking her. Of course she protested her innocence; but her anxiety to keep her appointment made her entreat to be off with more warmth than was quite consistent with innocence; so at least, the policeman who came up thought, and he did not hesitate to take her to the Lower Street station.

There Lotty was formally charged and searched. Of course, no purse was found on her; but, as the prosecutor urged, there was plenty of time for her to have passed the stolen article on to an accomplice, who probably lay in waiting.

In one respect Angerstein was disappointed. Lotty's pocket contained a sovereign, a few shillings, a key, and an old letter; but no papers of the kind he was in search of. In her glove was the piece of paper to which she had referred, having on it Kingston's address.

The rough search over, the prisoner was handed over to a female searcher, and upon her report Thaddeus nearly compromised himself beyond recall.

The woman handed to the sergeant in attendance certain papers.

"I have found these in her bosom," she said.
 "Ha! They are—" Thaddeus exclaimed, about to claim them.

"They were stitched in," added the woman quietly. The man bit his lip to restrain the words which rose to it, which would have condemned him. Obviously it was impossible that these papers could have been stolen from him and stitched into the woman's dress in that space of time.

But this was not all, as Angerstein soon found. The ingenious Flora had defeated herself. By inciting her brother to give Lotty into custody, she had compelled the production of the very papers which it was her great object, on Mark's behalf, to conceal from the light of day.

Lotty, quick and indignant, saw the man's confusion.
 "His name? Let him give his name," she said, turning to Sergeant Goss, who stood by at the moment. Angerstein handed his card—he could not do otherwise.

Directly Goss read it aloud, Lotty threw herself into a state of the most furious excitement.

"This is a trap!" she cried out. "This man's sister is in a league with Captain Allardye to save his family from exposure and ruin, and to crush an innocent man. They know that I've proof of their guilt; that I was on my way to give evidence that would have crushed them; and they've set this man to work to have me taken up on this lying charge to pick his pocket! He'd have claimed these papers if he dared. He's a man who's trying to rob the innocent and enrich the guilty!"

Angerstein smiled superciliously—he was content that the girl should rave; but he never took his eyes from the papers which had been taken from her bosom.

He saw that Goss read them carefully, then folded them up with the woman's money and key, and placed them in an iron-safe appropriated to the reception of such articles.

"When will this charge be taken?" Angerstein asked, his fingers itching to clutch at the little parcel which he knew might contain the right to an earldom.

"To-morrow morning," was the sergeant's answer.

"I will be here," was the reply.

It was after Angerstein was gone, that Goss, having entered into conversation with Lotty, received from her convincing proofs of her power, and the motives which her enemies clearly had in keeping her out of Meredith's way, and, as the result, he waited on the young man, as we have seen, and brought them back with him.

On reaching the station, both Meredith and Hildred were shown into a private room, and Sergeant Goss, addressing the former, said:

"What I'm going to say and do isn't strictly professional, Mr. Meredith, and I know it; but I'm convinced, all things taken together, that you're the victim of the same conspiracy that destroyed poor Dan'l Kingston and his daughter, that I'm determined to go a step out of my way to give you a chance of righting yourself; I'm going to show you the papers found on the prisoner."

Saying this, he produced the packet of money and the key wrapped up in the papers, as described, and, unfolding the packet, handed the wrappers to Meredith.

The latter was astounded.

For a moment he was dumb with joy and gratitude.

The papers over which he cast his eyes were very singular. Each one was of a double thickness. That was occasioned in this way. The part on which the writing appeared had evidently been torn into a hundred pieces, some so minute that they composed only a single letter, or part of a word. But all these scraps had been put together with the most scrupulous care, and fastened on to a sheet of paper which formed the back, and so accounted for the second thickness.

In this strange manner had been preserved copies of the registries of two births, one at Milan, the other at Paris.

The reader who recollects the statements which old Aaron Greggson made to Kingston Meredith on his deathbed, will understand the feelings with which the young man regarded these documents. One was in Italian, one in French; but each had been interlined with a feeble translation. The names of the places at which they had been signed were, however, enough for Meredith.

He did not doubt but that he saw before him copies of the entries of the births of the two children of Rupert, Earl of St. Omer, and Azalie, his first countess.

Of these children, one had died a waiter at a wretched chop-house in the city.

The other, called David Meredith, was, he had no doubt, his own lamented father.

The copy of the register more especially affecting himself, had been translated in these terms:

"Church of San Joseph, Milan, July 13th, 18—
 David Meredith, son of David and Azalie Meredith, both English. Rank or profession of parent, gentleman, residence, &c."

"These were the very papers of which I was in search in Paris," cried Kingston. "They are credentials which will secure me the earldom."

"One moment, King," said Hildred; "they are invaluable to you, as this woman doubtless knows—though how they got into her possession is a mystery—but there is one other paper, without which they are useless."

"Indeed!"

"Yes—reflect for a moment. What was it which, as you told me, you found Leon Marne failed to secure for you at Montreux?"

"Right. It was the certificate of Rupert's marriage?"

"Yes; and unless you can prove that, what have you accomplished?"

Meredith reflected for a moment, then all his enthusiasm died away.

"Nothing," he said, very mournfully. "Nothing."

"True; the earl's legitimate heirs, wherever born, would take precedence of his—"

He paused.

The blood mounted to the cheek of Meredith, even at the hint of a stain upon his fair fame and that of his father, and Frank saw that it was not safe to pursue the theme.

"It's a strange thing," remarked Sergeant Goss, "how these papers came to be in this condition. It seems as if they had been torn up for the purpose of being destroyed, and then, whoever it was, had altered their mind."

"Yes," said Meredith, sadly: "and perhaps that one paper—that one certificate which would have formed the key-stone to my fortunes, and without which they crumble into dust—has shared the fate from which these were recovered."

For more than an hour this subject was discussed, and then Meredith, having secured the sympathy of Sergeant Goss in his cause, proceeded to the office of an old legal friend of his, Mr. Abernethy Plunkett, and laid the case before him.

Plunkett was not a sanguine man, and he was not at first at all disposed to think much of the case.

"It is too wild—too visionary!" he said; "it's one of those cases in which a man wants a long purse to fight with, and is likely to have the long purse left—with no-nothing in it!"

Meredith was, however, enthusiastic, and when he had detailed all the circumstances, particularly the facts with regard to the marriage which Sandoun and Mark were so anxious to push forward, Plunkett warmed to the case, and eventually gave his decision in these terms:

"The old duke," he said, "is a beg-beggar—his son is worse; he is over head and ears in debt, and has very little character even to go upon. They are both in my hands, and I've only to hold up my little finger to crush 'em! Young Allardye is a fool at top and a knave at bottom. As to the earl, I pity him; but I tell you what—another shock won't kill him, and if you choose, we'll make a bold stand. I'll rush boldly in and loudly assert your claim. If it does nothing else, it may put a stop to this wed-wedding, and give you time to look about you for this important document."

So it was arranged.

What resulted we have seen.

Meanwhile, Lotty was brought up on the charge which had been preferred against her; and, as might have been expected, there was no prosecutor.

Thaddeus Angerstein had risked enough. He did not care to venture into court and to have his name associated with a malicious charge against a woman who evidently had him and his sister in her power.

So, at the time Lotty was discharged, and went off in a cab with Meredith—who was waiting for her—and Hildred and the sergeant to Plunkett's offices, Angerstein was engaged as one in a little conference which was going on at an hotel not far distant from the police-court.

The parties were Flora. Angerstein, her brother and Mark.

"Most unfortunate!" Flora exclaimed, as she heard as much as her brother and Mark had to relate—not so much as we are acquainted with. "Evidently that woman has seen Hildred, if not Meredith, and has given them such information as has justified them in putting the matter into a lawyer's hands."

"And the worst of it is," said Mark, "I hear from Sandoun this morning that the duke is nervously anxious to be off the match. He's poor as Job, but he's as proud as Lucifer!"

"The fool is afraid of compromising the family credit, I suppose!" sneered Flora. "And yet he might clear himself of his difficulties if he would only let the match come off! But you have not heard

the worst yet. The worst is that Blanche has suddenly recovered—Heaven knows how—her old faith and trust in the beggar Meredith!"

"The deuce she has!" exclaimed Mark.

"Yes, some letter has fallen into her hands. Some underhand work that I don't understand, has gone on, and that indifference and distrust which we've done so much to build up, has absolutely vanished. She's infatuated again."

"The idiot!" was Mark's commentary.

The interview was protracted.

It resulted, however, in little but a general determination to hold the citadel against the common foe; to use every art that might secure victory, and only to capitulate at the last moment, and then on the best terms that could be made.

But when Mark left, it was with a heavy heart.

His circumstances were desperate, and he felt that Sandoun's ruin would be his also, so greatly had they acted together. Nothing could save them but the wedding; and that, though fixed a few days hence, seemed further off than ever.

And then there was the dark, the terrible background, against which monetary difficulties seemed dwarfed into insignificance. The shadow of hasty, ill-considered, but fearful crimes was upon him. The avenging furies were on his track. What had fallen from the lips of the girl Lotty, and the startling denunciations of Nathan Lee haunted him, and filled the very air with accusing voices.

So, though his step was light, and he wore his hat placed jauntily on his head, a camellia in his coat, a cigar in his mouth, and dangled a cane in his daintily-gloved hands with assumed indifference, his heart was like a stone.

He had left the hotel a street or two behind.

Seeing a cab, he was about to hail it, when two men stepping forward saved him the trouble.

"Step in, sir!" said one significantly.

"At whose suit?" asked Mark.

"The Queen's!" answered the man with a coarse laugh.

"What do you mean?" said Mark, turning deadly pale.

"That I take you on a criminal charge, Captain Mark Allardye—"

"Criminal?"

"Yes! I charge you with the murder of Daniel Kingston."

Mark burst out into a loud, defiant laugh. He entered the cab, nevertheless, and a minute after was being driven off, sitting between the two men, handcuffed.

(To be continued.)

GARIBALDI'S son is going to be married to a Genoese, a daughter of an officer of the army of Marsala. At the moment of the preparations, which commenced the other week, for the ceremony to take place, news from New York reached him, saying that a monument by subscription was about to be raised in honour of his mother, Anita Garibaldi, who was a South American.

AMONG the objects presented to the Emperor and Empress of the French on the day of the official reception, by the Annamite Ambassadors, are several articles of furniture in lacquer; work-boxes in ivory; two enormous elephant's tusks mounted in silver; two rhinoceros' horns mounted in gold; a palanquin similar to that used by the Emperor of Annam, and destined for the Prince Imperial; a handsome sabre mounted in gold, with the hilt in jade and the scabbard in transparent tortoise-shell; a dragon in gold, under glass; and a block of eagle wood which has a delicious perfume, and representing a celebrated and sacred grove in the country. The most interesting object of all, however, is a large carpet of red cloth, on which is embroidered the one hundred transformations of the character of the Cochin Chinese alphabet, which signifies longevity.

SUNRISE AT SEA.—At break of day this morning, on looking out of the porthole of my cabin, the glory of the scene spread before me rendered me speechless with admiration. Who can describe the grandeur, the glorious colours of that sunrise? The burning crimson clouds, deeply streaked with the darkest and fullest neutral tints, spread above deep, fantastically shaped clouds that rose like mountains from the sea. Above the burnished crimson was a bright gleam of greenish-blue sky, and above that was a profusion of clouds in tones of still deeper and more burning crimson, mixed with the dark, neutral ones, spread upon a sky of the most vivid and deep ultramarine colour. The purple waves rose and swelled, glowing with the richest tints. On the left, also, deep neutral clouds stood up from the sea like a dark mountain with streams of crimson light thrown upon its head, in front of which the softest, fullest and most brilliantly white clouds contrasted with the deep blue sea, on which they appeared to rest. The man who dedicated the dim, religious glooms and the crimson-

thine lights of a cathedral to the service of the Almighty, must have taken the idea from the feelings inspired by such a scene, where a gorgeous profusion of solemn tints bows the soul to Him who hath "spread his glory in the heavens." This sunrise has repaid the toil and trouble of the voyage; the sunsets are magnificent; but who shall describe the glory of the rising sun, the depth of shade, the burning light?—a scene that can never be forgotten, a glory that never can pass from the memory even to the last.

THE GREY EAGLE OF THE SIOUX.

CHAPTER XIX.

NELSON THE GUIDE.—HIS CONFESSION.—HIS WILL.—THE MINNESOTA MASSACRE.

WHEN Maurice Rutherford returned to his regiment after he had recovered from his wounds, he was delighted to find among the officers the manly presence of Nelson, the guide. The two clasped hands, and Nelson's voice was husky when he exclaimed:

"How glad I am to meet you, Rutherford!"

"I began to think," rejoined the young man, "that you, like some other friends I found on the Western prairies, had turned a cold shoulder."

"What do you mean to insinuate?"

"Jessie Reed, whom I thought an angel, scorned me after she had learned I had failed to establish my claim to those lands, and when months dragged by, and I neither saw nor heard anything of you, I thought your conduct mysterious, at least."

"What you say with regard to Miss Reed, both shocks and surprises me; but as for myself, I am sure I can explain. For the first time in many years, I have been very ill, and when I recovered, you had left the settlement. I learned you had been unsuccessful in your law affairs, and thought you might have gone to Pike's Peak. I therefore took a journey to the new gold region, but not finding you there, came back, to hear that you had enlisted. Hastening to St. Louis, the name of Nelson procured me a commission, for they thought I should be a good man for the border strife."

"Ah, they couldn't have a better!" said Rutherford.

"I wish to speak with you a few moments alone before I leave you," replied Nelson; "come into my tent to-night, and I will tell you why I have taken such a strange interest in you from our first meeting."

They separated; and hours later, when only the steps of the picket could be heard in the camp, Rutherford entered Captain Nelson's tent. His friend pointed him to a seat, and said, with a sad smile:

"The locked heart of the inexplicable guide is about to be unfolded to you; years ago I was a man of the world, and had rare advantages for culture, both by study and travel. It was during the summer of 18—, that I met your sister Maud! Every pulse thrills, as I recall my mad love for her, and we were betrothed lovers when she was estranged from me through the machinations of a rival. She fled from her home, and it was represented to me, and to others, that she had eloped with a young Spaniard who had been a student at the university in her native town. But, thank Heaven, I at last found her on a plantation in Mississippi, where she was a governess. Death had set his seal upon her, but we were reconciled; she died in my arms! To me there was but one woman in the world, and I have ever since been faithful to her memory. Disgusted with the hollow forms of society, I retired from the world, where I had once moved, and became a Rocky Mountain guide. When I saw you, your resemblance to Maud struck me, and when you told me your name, I knew you must be her brother, though you never dreamed that Nelson, the guide, and Holmes Willis, your dead sister's lover, were the same."

"No, oh, no! but I felt a strong attachment to you, nevertheless, and it cost me a keen pang to think I had lost your friendship."

"I shall yet prove to you how friendly I am," And rising, he moved to Rutherford, and laid his hand upon his head, adding: "In a secret compartment of my camp-chest, you will find a copy of my will. I have my lands, my houses, my bank-stock, and if I fall, they are yours; if I live, you shall share my wealth, and when peace once more reigns, we will enjoy our riches."

We will not dwell longer on this scene, but proceed with the fortunes of war. A stormy year went by; a year when many a brave man fell, many a home was darkened, many a heart bled. Horace Reed had died of cholera, and the same disease had terminated Waldo Marston's life. He had bequeathed his whole fortune to Jessie, as the only woman he had ever truly loved, and she divided his estates between the dusky Minniwawa and the fair, blue-eyed, golden-tressed child of poor Hester. What more

sitting mission could there be for one like Jessie, than to soothe and cheer the wounded and the dying in the hospitals? In her simple dress, and her dark hair knotted back from her face, she went from place to place, wherever she knew she was needed; but though she two or three times saw Rutherford enter on a visit to some poor comrade, she dared not come forward and speak to him. She felt instinctively that he was Valerie's. Meanwhile, the seeds of discontent, which had been sown among the Sioux, were ripening for a fearful harvest—a harvest of blood and tears! Their natural hate of the white man had been aggravated by recent events, and probably by the non-arrival of their annuity from the Government. They knew far more than the authorities suspected of the stirring events which had been transpiring in the country. "Other Day," "Little Crow," and a few more, had been sent more than once to Washington. The former had brought back with him a white wife, and some could read and speak English as well as the Sioux tongue. The war-news, as it reached them through the papers, or floating along in gossip, would be taken up, and circulated among the lodges. The missionaries were often asked whether it was true that the rebels had burned all the large cities, the Great Father had been killed, or taken prisoner, and his armies destroyed.

During the military enthusiasm that prevailed in filling the Minnesota regiments, a company of half-breeds had been accepted, leading the Indians to the conclusion that the Government must be hard pressed for troops.

It was in August '62, that a party of Sioux attacked them like demons, shooting down three men by the roadside, burying their tomahawks in their quivering flesh, and with their scalps as trophies, returning to the encampment.

At nightfall a council-fire was lighted, and a council once more convened. How those fierce eyes burned beneath the dusky brow! how their lips curled and quivered! how stormily beat the wild, untutored heart of the red man! The most warlike of the braves were present, and old Waban sat in his accustomed place with all his wonted stateliness.

"Warriors," he cried, as he rose from his seat, "Waban's soul calls for war! The pale-faces have driven our race from the hunting-grounds where our fathers dwelt, across the Alleghanies, the Ohio, and the Mississippi, till we are forced to hunt in the boundaries they set. They promise us annuities, but they do not pay them; they promise peace, but they keep their forts bristling with bayonets; they promise us the enjoyment of our rights, but they plough our broad acres, and will soon frighten the deer and the bison from the land with their shrieking team-whistles. As a nation, they are false; false to the heart's core. Now is the time to strike and avenge our wrongs, for the best of their braves have gone to the war, and none are left behind except old men, women and children; it will be an easy task to massacre them, and then plunder their villages. Waban's voice calls for vengeance; what says Grey Eagle?"

The young chieftain rose to his full height, and there was a solemn grandeur in his face and bearing, as he exclaimed:

"A few moons ago, I should have been foremost in massacring the pale-faces. I thirsted for their blood, and was never so proud as when their scalps swung from my belt, and the flames of their burning cabins reddened the sky. But a change has come over Grey Eagle; let the chieftains hearken. It was during this summer that I encamped near St. Paul's with several of the warriors; while there, I was attacked with a disease whose very name chills the blood—the cholera. A white traveller told us what the disease was, and the bravest warriors of the Sioux, who would be fiercest in their vengeance, fled in dismay. I was lying there alone, with the coldness of a thousand deaths settling on me, when Meda stole in; it is well known that we had been estranged, as she had grown jealous of my passion for the prairie-rose, but now all her old love for me came back. She flew to the city, for she had befriended Jessie Reed, and she felt that she should not ask her in vain for help. I knew nothing more till Meda, and a pale medicine-man, and the maiden whom I had called the prairie-rose when she dwelt on the banks of the Cheyenne, were beside me. An Indian never forgets a kindness; but for my white brother and sister, the pioneer's daughter, I should have died! They stood by me when my own warriors fled; they were the means of sending me back to my tribe; and after all this, shall I raise my hand against them? No!" And he extended his arm. "No! let it wither first. Drive me from your councils, from your lodges, if you will; but by the Great Spirit I swear I will not join in the massacre—never more lift the tomahawk, or draw my bow upon a pale-face!"

The warriors sprang to their feet in blended rage and wonder, and dissolving into little groups, thus discussed Grey Eagle's harangue. Not being able to agree, they adjourned to the home of Little Crow, who occupied a comfortable house, and had exchanged his

savage dress for the garments worn by the white man. The crafty, though ambitious chief, described the power and resources of the enemy, the flood of wrath they were proposing to turn upon themselves, and the privileges they would forfeit, and attempted to dissuade them from their purpose. Still, if the young braves were resolved to begin their work, he would be their leader. A rumour was current among the Indians that in the previous spring a "big man," as they styled him, passed through the country from the north-west, toward St. Paul's, claiming to be a British subject, and told them to rise and kill off all the whites in their midst, and promising that when they attempted it, the people in British America would come down and help them.

Thus the flame was fanned, and the purposes which had been confined to a few, soon spread through the tribe. That night, the night of the holy Sabbath, around their council-fire they danced the war-dance, with the blood-stained scalps from Red Wood, painted their dusky faces, folded their blankets over their guns and tomahawks, and moved in single file from their village to the Lower Agency.

As the morning broke in brightness and beauty, they moved on, and entered the agency. When questioned as to the reason of having gathered in such numbers, they declared they were on their way to fight the Chippewas, and as they were known to be at sword's points with this tribe, no apprehensions were aroused till the signal had been given. Then the Indian war-whoops rang loud and long on the summer air, and the savage scenes of Wyoming were re-enacted in our own day. Language fails to describe the horrors of a single hour; the rifle, the tomahawk and the scalping-knife did their fatal work; the hitherto peaceful cabins of the settlers were first crimsoned with their own blood, and then wrapped in flames. Plunder was added to massacre, and everything of value taken and heaped into waggons, to be borne to the Indian encampment at Red Wood. The groans of the dying, and wild cries for mercy, mingled with their own demoniac shrieks and howls; that was indeed a reign of terror scarcely less fearful than the one witnessed in Paris years ago, when the streets were crimsoned with gore, and the waters of the Seine red with blood. Refugees from all quarters gathered in the garrison, and the four days' siege of Fort Ridgely will be memorable in American history! Homes were left desolate, or in blackened ruins; harvests waved in golden splendour, but no shining sickle gleamed amid the grain, no stalwart reaper bound up the heavy sheaves. Weary feet trod the broad prairies; weary eyes strained their gaze to find a place of refuge; weary hearts sent earnest prayers for succour to Him who has said that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice. Women and children nestled like scared birds wherever they could obtain a shelter, or fled as the deer flees before the huntsman.

CHAPTER XX.

MAURICE RUTHERFORD'S MEETING WITH JESSIE.—RECONCILIATION.

AMONG the reinforcements sent to Fort Ridgely after the alarm had spread through the Minnesota valley, was the company commanded by him whom we have known as Nelson, the Rocky Mountain guide. Maurice Rutherford's bravery had already gained him promotion, and since his love-dream had faded, he lived for his country. On arriving at the fort, smouldering embers, flickering flames, and dingy smoke-wreaths gave mournful confirmation of the accounts of the Minnesota massacre; but as none of the dusky warriors were in sight, they were sent to bury the dead, which blackened the prairies. When they had encamped in a deep ravine, and stillness had succeeded to the crackling of the fire and the hum of voices, Lieutenant Rutherford fancied he heard a sharp cry—a cry which vividly reminded him of Jessie Reed's shriek, when she was drifting down the Cheyenne on a frail raft. He rose and moved cautiously along the ravine. A moment more, and a female figure tottered forward, and sank at his feet, her long, shadowing hair enveloping her like a pall.

"Jessie!"

Oh, the love, the anguish, the regret which pulsed out in the utterance of that word! But the poor girl did not hear it; and after a brief pause, he bore her into the camp. As the dim light flickered over her, it revealed a wan face, blood-stained garments, and bare and bleeding feet. Rutherford's heart beat quick, and leaving her for an instant, he summoned Captain Nelson.

"What have we here?" cried the captain. "Good Heavens, it is Miss Reed!"

"Yes, we have met once more. I heard a cry, and found her a few paces distant in the ravine."

"Did she recognize you?"

"I cannot tell, for she fainted immediately. We will do all we can for her."

It was a half-hour ere Jessie awoke to consciousness, and then lifting her eyes, she said:

"You are Lieutenant Rutherford!"

"And you are still Jessie Reed; the gossip of St. Paul's told me a few weeks ago that you were free."

"Yes, both Waldo Marston and my father are dead; I alone in the world, all alone. Somewhat worn down with the new cares and responsibilities which I had assumed, I came to visit a friend in Minnesota; she and her children were massacred by the Sioux, but, through God's mercy, I effected my escape. For three days I have been a wanderer, and I cannot live long. Suffering has wasted my strength, and I believe I am dying; but before I die, I wish to be at peace with you. Baise me so that I can breathe more freely!"

The young man obeyed, and she continued:

"There is one dark hour in my life, Maurice—an hour in which I was false to myself, and to you! I refer to our parting at the Selkirk settlement; but I was not wholly to blame. An anonymous letter which I received, poisoned my mind, and assured me you never truly loved any woman save Valerie, now known as Sister Cecilia, and the most beautiful of the Grey Nuns. Disguised as a poor woman, seeking food and shelter, I gained admittance to the convent, and peered into the room where you lay ill. She was watching beside you, and what I saw confirmed me in my belief that you loved her. Under these impressions, I met you that night, and told you a falsehood. I cared not a farthing for Marston's gold, but resolved you should not see how my heart bled!"

"Oh, Jessie, Jessie! if I had known this, how much we might both have spared!"

"Yes; but as it is, I would not draw you an instant from your allegiance to Valerie. She has loved you from her early girlhood—loved you through storm and sunshine. Bury me on the prairies, for they are associated with you; bury me there, and then go back and be happy with Valerie."

"Do not talk of dying, Jessie; you must live for me, now. As for Valerie, she is a sister, nothing more; it was my refusal to marry her that drove her to a convent, and she understands, fully understands, that I regard her only as a sister. I shall bear you to a place of safety as soon as the Indian troubles are quelled; the rose will bloom on your cheek once more, and you will be as arch, beautiful, and bewildering as when I first knew you."

He bore her to a tent, and was talking over all that passed in her hospital life, when the guard announced that Indians had been seen lurking amid the grass on the prairies which swept towards the ravine. The morning air rang with war-whoops, but during the terrific struggle which ensued, Jessie's life was preserved; and when the troops began their march to Fort Riddle, she was escorted thither under a strong guard.

The sight of the forces which had been sent to reinforce Nelson, convinced the Indians that the Government still had vast resources at command, and was the first effective check they had received. It shook their faith, and daunted their courage; and following the advice of Grey Eagle, they decided to sue for peace. An embassy was accordingly despatched to the camp, and through them a note from Little Crow was presented to Colonel Sibley. In it he asserted that the braves were tired of the war, that they had been drawn into it by the fraud of traders, and now inwardly wished for peace. But the soldiers were impatient to pursue the savages, and it was not until the last of September that they were completely routed. The charge of the seventh regiment on horseback threw them into utter confusion, and gained one of the most complete victories ever achieved in Indian warfare. This, and the capture of the camp at Wild-Goose-Nest Lake, with provisions taken elsewhere, ended their carnage, and the ring-leaders were lodged in gaol to await their doom. The fate they afterwards met, when, chanting their death-hymns, they were launched into eternity, are matters of history, and among the atrocities perpetrated by Black Hawk and King Philip, none are more fearful than those of the Minnesota massacre.

In these scenes Captain Nelson and Rutherford gained new laurels, and were promoted; neither Southern shell nor Indian tomahawk have harmed the gallant Bayard, and Pilot still keeps watch by his master's tent.

Amid the fortunes of war, Captain Rutherford received a furlough long enough to visit St. Paul's last spring, when his marriage with Jessie Reed at the Presbyterian church became the town-talk. His bride is now residing in the beautiful home presented to the wedded pair by Maud Rutherford's old lover, who in every respect treats him as a brother.

Valerie has gone back to the convent, and Mrs. Rutherford finds her daughter-in-law so beautiful and charming that she ceases to regret the failure of her schemes to bring about an alliance between her son and the fair West Indian.

Will Baum has proved that his reformation was

sincere and thorough, and his father's eyes kindle as he sees the sturdy young man preparing to take his place among the trappers, and be the stay and comfort of his old age.

White Cloud's stormy life is ended, but Rutherford and John Marsh have kept their promise, and since her mother's death she has found fast friends in them. She and Blanche, with the servant who has been so faithful to both, reside in a pleasant house opposite to Rutherford's; and though the girls have an excellent governess, young Mr. Rutherford feels himself responsible for their training.

Deane Hollingsworth is the same gay, frank, generous man that we found him two years ago on the prairies, and laughingly declares he fell in love with Blanche when they first met, and shall wait till she has grown to womanhood ere he settles down to domestic life.

And Reuben Durfee and his family—what of them? He has been very prosperous, and it is long since a messenger from Pike's Peak brought Hollingsworth the principal and interest of his loan, and Jessie Reed a bridal present in the shape of what they, in a letter, which was the joint authorship of Reuben and his wife, assured her was "the biggest nugget that could be found in the diggin's."

Red Wing is still among the Sioux, working her spells, and, with real Indian craft, urging her people once more to go forth against the pale-faces.

Grey Eagle has thus far kept his promise never to molest the white men more. His heart has returned to its allegiance to Meda; in his love she has found peace and repose, and I doubt if even Maurice Rutherford is prouder of his bride, than the Sioux warrior of the dusky-eyed, raven-tressed chief's daughter.

THE END.

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.

Author of "The Jewit," "The Pretate," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Since thou'rt urged justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desirest.
Shakespeare.

A FEW days after the interview with the Duke of Ayrton, Mr. Brindley received notice from the office of Mr. Quirk, that Lord Moretown was about to apply to the Court of Chancery, to receive the rents of the Digby property, in right of his wife—a lunatic.

The other executors of the old lady's will received a similar invitation.

This recalled to the recollection of the goldsmith the paper the grand-aunt of Alice had placed in his hands a few minutes before her death: as yet he had not opened it.

By the advice of Mr. Palgrave, who had consulted the lawyer who had drawn the will—he refrained from doing so: the legal adviser shrewdly observing, that it would be better it should be produced in court with the seals unbroken.

"It is our only chance of defeating his lordship!" he said; "the law is so clearly on his side, that unless the testatrix has otherwise provided, he is sure to obtain a decree in his favour!"

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Brindley; "against her evident intention that no portion of the property should ever come under his control?"

"Even so!" said the man of law, smiling at the earnestness of the speaker. "Intentions! There is nothing so difficult to prove in law as an intention! The kingdom of a certain personage, whom I will not shock your ears by naming, is not the only place that is paved with them!"

It was arranged, accordingly, that the mysterious packet should only be opened on the day appointed for hearing the petition of the earl.

"And this is law!" thought the goldsmith to himself, as he sat, ruminating, after business hours, in his counting-house. "My niece has been stripped of every shilling of her fortune by the titled ruffian who married her for no other motive than wealth—declared insane by I know not what manoeuvres—and now the provision made by her relative—who foresaw the rascality of her husband—will be wrested from her! He shall fight hard for it, though!" he added.

Goliath entered the room.

"May I speak with you, sir?" said the young man.

"May you speak with me!" repeated his master, "Of course you may! Whom else have I to confide in, or feel for me, but you?"

"I have a favour to ask!"

"Take it, Goliath," said Mr. Brindley, "whatever it is!"

"I wish to absent myself for three days, on business of a private nature!"

The old man looked at him earnestly. His thoughts were of his godson; yet he dared not ask any direct question.

"You have received no ill news, I trust," he ob-

served, "from any of your friends—any one who is dear to you?"

"No!" replied his assistant, eagerly. "All that I love, or feel an interest in, except my poor lady, are well!"

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed the goldsmith, emphatically; "thank Heaven, Goliath!" Struck by a sudden thought, he added: "Change would do me good; for I have been sadly tried of late! Could not I go, instead of you?"

"No, sir!" answered the friend of Alice, gravely.

"With you, then?"

"Worse and worse! We should both be suspected! Your steps, I have every reason to believe, are watched! If it were known that we left London together, mine would be so, too! We must be prudent—for the sake of others, as well as our own!"

His master acquiesced, with a sigh; although nothing in the way of explanation had passed between them, further than the few words on the night of the goldsmith's return, the worthy man felt comparatively easy on the fate of his godson; for, if nothing was acknowledged, much was implied between them.

"Go!" he said; "and return when you please!"

The next day Goliath started on his mysterious expedition. No one, save his employer, knew that he was going. He left the house in the middle of the day, without even a great coat, or luggage of any kind—and yet the journey before him was a long and tedious one.

The following morning, in consequence of the absence of his assistant, Mr. Brindley was compelled to devote himself entirely to business. In the course of the morning a lady drove up to the shop, and requested to speak with him. She announced herself as the wife of Captain Vernon.

"Then, madam," replied the goldsmith, handing her a seat, "you are the wife of as honourable a man as ever breathed! I have known your husband since he was a middy, and have watched his progress in the profession he has chosen with interest! I shall never forget," he added, "the honourable sacrifice he made on the death of his poor father!"

"It is upon that very point," replied the lady, with a faint smile—for despite her grief and embarrassment, she felt proud at the justice done to the character of her absent husband—"that I have called to consult you!"

The goldsmith bowed.

"You are aware that, to pay his father's debts," continued the lady, "Captain Vernon mortgaged the family estate, which was strictly entailed, to your brother-in-law, Mr. Nicholas Arden?"

"Perfectly, madam!"

"And that it was either implied or agreed—I am not certain which—that the money should not be called in for twelve years—by which period my husband hoped to be enabled to clear it off?"

"Nothing can be more fairly or correctly stated!" "How is it, then," continued Mrs. Vernon, "that whilst my husband is absent on duty, he is served with a notice to repay the money in six months? I am alarmed—for his sake and my children's! I know his heart clings to the property—the inheritance of his forefathers, the home of his childhood; and, strange or inexcusable as the step may appear, have come up to London to consult you upon the subject!"

"Madam," said the goldsmith, taking her by the hand, "you could not have paid me a greater compliment than deeming me worthy of your confidence? Rest perfectly satisfied that my friend's interests shall not suffer from his absence! The mortgage is now vested in my niece's husband, the Earl of Moretown. If he insists upon calling in the money, I will pay it—the securities can be transferred to me! The only difference it will make is, that I shall hold the right over the estate, instead of his lordship!"

Mrs. Vernon was most profuse in her thanks. There was an earnestness, a womanly grace in her manner and tone of thought, which pleased the goldsmith; and he promised to wait upon her at the house of a relative—a clergyman—whose address she gave.

During the rest of the day Mr. Brindley appeared to be revolving some project in his mind; and more than once repeated to himself—

"Would that Goliath were here!"

On visiting Mrs. Vernon, a few days afterwards, to announce that the mortgage had been transferred to him, and that she might make herself perfectly easy on the subject, the lady expressed the most eloquent thanks, and a hope that an occasion might arrive when she or her husband could prove their gratitude by something more than words.

"It is possible—very possible!" said the goldsmith, hesitatingly; "when do you expect the captain home?"

"In about eight months."

"Well, then," said the old gentleman, "when he returns, inform him that I trust he will not leave England without seeing me!"

The lady looked surprised.

"Could you suspect him of such ingratitude?" she said.

"What a mother such a woman would make to my poor boy!" thought the goldsmith, as he left the house; "could I but find him, and induce her to undertake the charge!"

The day at last arrived for the hearing of the petition of Godfrey, Earl of Moretown, to be assigned the rents of the Digby property, secured to the sole and separate use of Alice Countess of Moretown—a lunatic.

The learned, counsel, Mr. Bletherall—the same who had conducted the inquiry at the holding of the commission, rose to address his lordship. He painted in the most feeling terms the unhappiness of his client, whose felicity had been so fatally interrupted by the dispensation of Providence; asked who so fit to receive the income of the property as the afflicted husband, upon whom the expense of maintaining the countess in befitting comfort and retirement must fall; and in conclusion cited "Snarl versus Grimm," and several other precedents, in support of the decree he was instructed to move for.

"Is the petition opposed?" inquired the Chancellor.

"I should think not, my lord," replied the learned counsel; "I should hope not. I see in court several of the trustees and executors, but trust they are here merely to watch the proceedings; in fact, that the application will be considered by them as a friendly one, and only opposed *pro forma*, in discharge of their trust."

The Chancellor repeated his question as to whether the application was opposed.

Serjeant Silvertongue slowly rose.

"My lord," began the learned serjeant, "I have just been informed of a circumstance which I think may greatly influence the present proceedings. With respect to the feelings of the husband of the unhappy lady—of course we all of us perfectly comprehend them!"

Lawyer Quirk, who was seated between the inner bar and the bench, looked up uneasily.

"The fact is, my lord," continued the speaker, "that the present application might, and in all probability would, meet your lordship's favourable attention, but for the circumstance which I am about to bring under your lordship's notice! The late Lady Digby—the testatrix of the large property at issue—on her death-bed confided to one of her executors—Mr. Brindsly, a gentleman of unblemished reputation, in whom she appears to have placed implicit confidence—a paper or deed with the following directions, written in her own hand: 'To be opened only in the event of my niece, Alice Countess of Moretown, being declared insane.'"

Quirk absolutely suffered a groan of vexation and anger to escape him.

"Now, my lord, I humbly suggest," said the serjeant, in conclusion, "that before any decision can be come to upon the subject of the petitioner's application by your lordship, that the deed, paper, or codicil should be read: seeing that it possibly may, and in all probability does, contain the instructions and wishes of the testatrix, in the event taking place to which, from the instructions, there is every reason to believe it alludes."

To this, of course, no objection could be urged. The packet was handed by Mr. Brindsly to the serjeant, who broke the seals, and, after the usual preamble, read as follows:—

"In the event of Godfrey Earl of Moretown succeeding in proving the insanity of my niece, Alice Countess of Moretown, or in the event of her really becoming insane, or of being separated from my godson, Digby Brindsly Moretown, I will and direct that the rents of the estates, as well as the interest of all moneys bequeathed by me to the said Alice Countess of Moretown, be paid to James Brindsly, Esquire, to be invested and held by him in trust for the benefit of the said Digby Brindsly Moretown, my godson, and paid over to him on his reaching the full age of twenty-one; and in the event of his dying before attaining that age, the moneys so invested to be considered as a portion of my residuary estate, and divided between my relatives, share and share alike."

The countenances of Quirk and Mr. Bletherall expressed the utmost consternation and disappointment at the downfall of their client's scheme; for they knew that, in the face of the codicil so unexpectedly produced, no decree could be made.

"Have you any objection," demanded the latter personage, addressing his learned colleague, "to allow me to examine the document?"

Serjeant Silvertongue handed it to him with a smile so bland and courteous, that Quirk felt there was little hope of his counsel detecting a flaw in it. From Bletherall it was passed to the Chancellor, who, after perusing it, returned it to the serjeant without comment.

"I need not observe, my lord," said Mr. Bletherall, "on this very extraordinary document, or the conduct of the trustee in so long keeping it a secret. Your

lordship has doubtless noticed the facts and divined the motives."

"Do you impeach the validity of the codicil?" inquired his lordship.

"No, my lord; that is to say, I shall advise my noble and respected client to take counsel's opinion on that point."

"And that you may do so with every facility," drily observed his opponent, "I shall advise Mr. Brindsly to obtain probate upon it directly. My lord," he continued, addressing the Chancellor, "the directions of the testatrix in the present instance are so explicit, that your lordship will agree with me that the court has no power to grant the prayer of the petitioner—seeing that the interest of the Countess of Moretown ceases in the property, according to the contingency so clearly expressed and provided."

His lordship nodded approvingly.

"Neither can this be considered a hardship," added the speaker, "upon the petitioner! The Earl of Moretown has already received more than four hundred thousand pounds with his wife, out of which sum it is not unreasonable to suppose that he is enabled to support her; the more especially, as neither previous to nor since her marriage, has this affectionate husband—although repeatedly urged by the friends of the unhappy lady—made any settlement upon her, in the event of his death!"

The Chancellor looked towards Bletherall, as if he expected him to reply. The learned counsellor slightly elevated his shoulders, and sat down—for he felt that matters were taking a turn which might prove anything but agreeable to the Earl of Moretown.

The application was finally dismissed.

Quirk whispered a few words into the ear of Mr. Bletherall.

"With costs, my lord?" said the latter, rising.

His lordship intimated that he should reserve his judgment upon that point; and the respective parties, gathering up their papers, left the court.

"Twelve thousand a-year gone!" muttered Quirk, as he rode from Westminster Hall to his chambers in Serjeants' Inn. "For once his lordship has been foiled—found the gratification of his revenge too costly!"

The more he reflected, the more he was convinced of the impossibility of upsetting the codicil; it was too well drawn—the contingency too clearly expressed—and the attesting witnesses unexceptionable.

The only chance for his client was to recover his son Digby.

Although the worthy goldsmith felt that he had succeeded in inflicting a heavy blow upon the avarice of his niece's husband, he was far from happy. The fate of Alice lay heavy at his heart, and he would willingly have resigned the advantage he had obtained, to have seen her once more restored to health: her reason—despite the assertion of Mr. Palgrave, and the verdict of the jury—he never for an instant doubted.

"Curse the money!" he said; "a curse seems to cling to it, go where it will! Had I remained in England, this could not have happened! On the first rumour of madness, I should have apprised Lord Moretown of the existence of a codicil: he would have hesitated ere he risked such a fortune! But now, too late—too late!"

On reaching his house in Lombard Street, he found that Goliath had returned from his mysterious visit. The old man shook him warmly by the hand; but, though his heart thirsted for information, he restrained himself, and merely asked if the friends he had been to see were well.

His assistant answered in the affirmative. Then, fearing that the affection of his master might hurry him into some indiscretion, he began to busy himself in the counting-house.

Great was Goliath's rejoicing when he heard of the result of Lord Moretown's application to the Chancellor; for he hated the peer in the same proportion that he loved his former kind and considerate mistress.

"It is the beginning of his punishment!" he said; "mark my words, sir, it is the beginning of his punishment! The will of Nicholas Arden will one day, I feel assured, turn up, and cover him with confusion!"

"You have often alluded," observed Mr. Brindsly, "to a will of my late brother-in-law? Tell me—have you any proof that he actually made one?"

"Nothing beyond my own conviction, sir!" replied the young man.

His master shook his head despondingly.

"He was too prudent—too fond of his money," continued his assistant, "to die without one, or to leave his daughter, whose generosity was the only fault he could ever find in her, the uncontrolled mistress of it! Such a supposition gives the lie to his whole life!"

Mr. Brindsly admitted that he was inclined to think so, too.

"Can it have been destroyed?" he said.

"More likely secreted by the old man himself!" replied Goliath; "and if so, rely upon it, it will one day turn up."

"And if it does," exclaimed the goldsmith, greatly excited, "we will pay this earl—this thing without heart or feeling—in his own base coin—strip him of his ill-acquired wealth, and trample on his pride, as he has trampled on the happiness of Alice!"

"Find it, master!" replied Goliath, emphatically, "and I will supply you with the instrument to accomplish both!"

CHAPTER XLVIII

We bid ill be done,
When evil deeds have their permissive pass
And not the punishment. *Shakespeare.*

THE production of the codicil to Lady Digby's will, and consequent defeat of his application to the Chancellor, was a terrible blow to the Earl of Moretown, who found himself wounded in the point where he was most sensible—his avarice. In the first burst of his fury, he bitterly cursed his folly in yielding to the influence of the female fiend who had goaded him, by her alternate blandishments and sneers, to perpetrate his crowning act of villany against his injured wife.

Like most selfish and unprincipled men, when disappointed in the result of their nefarious schemes, he cursed and lamented his ill-fortune. It was the loss of her wealth that he regretted—he had no pity for his victim.

"Twelve thousand a-year gone—lost!" he muttered. "Lost through my folly and imprudence! Who would have thought," he added, "that the old fool"—alluding to the grand-aunt of Alice—"had seen so far into my designs?"

This was uttered before Quirk, who was the first to bring him intelligence of the decision of the Chancellor. Although the lawyer served him most unscrupulously as the agent of his evil projects, he felt no interest for his client beyond the pecuniary one which resulted from the connection; and as that was unaffected by the failure of their scheme, the old man rather enjoyed his disappointment than otherwise.

"The loss is, indeed, a serious one," he observed; "even to the Earl of Moretown."

"Just as I was about to purchase the Grantly borough, too!" ejaculated his lordship.

"Better not think of that, my lord," observed Mr. Quirk, "unless the countess should fortunately recover."

"Recover!" repeated the peer, with an expression of intense bitterness; "never—never! There is no hope of that!"

"How is her ladyship's health?" added the lawyer, with a peculiar expression.

"Curse her health!" exclaimed his lordship, impatiently. "What do I know or care how it is?"

"Disinterested—very disinterested, indeed," said his tormentor; "considering that with her life your lordship's interest in the Riddle estate expires."

Lord Moretown became absolutely livid with rage. His crimes began to turn, like unnatural children, upon the parent who begot them. In the blind hatred which he entertained against his innocent wife, he had forgotten that contingency.

"Her uncle," continued Quirk, "as guardian of her mother's fortune would be sure to exact it. I have been to Doctors' Commons, and read over her mother's will: the conditions are not less stringent than those of Lady Digby's."

"Still I should be guardian of my son," exclaimed the guilty husband,

"Of his person undoubtedly," replied his adviser, "but not of his fortune, the will provides against it."

This was a second blow, equally fatal to his lordship's interest as the first.

"Quirk," he said, after a few moments' reflection, "you are a man of resources; the law must be stringent indeed which you could not contrive to evade or break through."

"You flatter me, my lord!"

"Advise me—counsel me," added his client; "the first blow has embarrassed me—the second would ruin me!"

"My lord," answered the man of law, deliberately, "I should ill deserve the confidence you repose in me were I to conceal the truth. You are checkmated: the goldsmith has been too much for us, and unless we can bring home to him the abduction of your son, and so place him at your mercy, your only hope of retaining the estate depends on the life of the countess. But, of course," he added with a meaning look, "she is quite safe under Dr. Briard's care."

Probably the husband of Alice did not share in the conviction, real or pretended, of his adviser—for he paced the library for some moments in silence; a terrible struggle between avarice and hate was warring in his breast. To retrace the false step he had made,

and restore his wife to liberty, was impossible, without compromising his honour—and that he clung to as men cling to the shadow after losing the substance. The only mediator—his child—had disappeared. Bitterly did he curse the blind fury which had misled him.

"Has Mr. Brindley been watched?" he inquired.
"He has, my lord: my agents follow his every step."

"And no clue?"
"None!"

"In that case you must start for the abbey to-night," said the peer, "and see Briard: impress upon his mind the necessity of taking every care of the health of his patient."

The lawyer could not avoid smiling at the sudden interest which the husband of Alice expressed towards her.

"If you find her worse," continued the speaker, "call in fresh advice. Her life, as you say, must be preserved at any sacrifice, save one—liberty!" he mentally added.

And he resolved, even though the gratification of his hatred should cost him the Riddle estate, as it had already done the large income from the Digby property, his victim should never again possess that.

The objections of Mr. Quirk to so long a journey were speedily overruled by his lordship—who, hastily writing a few lines to his confidential physician, at Moretown Abbey, gave them to the old man, after carefully sealing the envelope.

"You will report to me faithfully," he said, as he placed the missive in the hands of his messenger, "the state of the countess, the instant you return! Do not write!" he added; "letters sometimes compromise both the writer and the receiver!"

"Not such as mine!" observed the lawyer, as he took his leave. "I am not such an idiot as to set a spring in which I may be caught myself!"

"Fortune begins to play me false," muttered the peer, as he meditated on the result of his long-planned scheme of iniquity. Revenge is a luxury, but I had no idea of paying such a price for it. Twelve thousand a-year gone, besides the money I have settled on Athalie! Well—well!" he added, "since the price is paid, I will forget the bitters, and think only on the sweets it has purchased!"

With this amiable reflection, he sat down and wrote to the agent of his noble friend, declining the purchase of the Granly borough.

This was the first but not last galling disappointment he was doomed to reap from his cruel and vindictive conduct. The storm may be long in gathering, but the thunder-cloud is sure to burst at last.

The first thing Quirk occupied himself with, on his return home, was—by a clever process, well-known in a certain private apartment of the Post-Office—to turn the letter of his noble client inside out, without injuring the seal, and make himself master of the contents.

It was just such a letter as an affectionate husband would have written under the circumstances. It inquired most particularly after the health of the countess; directed that every indulgence should be permitted, compatible with the safety of his patient; and referred him for further instructions to his legal adviser, Mr. Quirk, who possessed, the writer added, in a postscript, his perfect confidence.

"Humph!" ejaculated the lawyer, in a tone of disappointment; "his lordship is as wily as a fox—not a word to lay hold of—cautious and suspicious! Had he devoted himself to the law, his reputation at the Old Bailey would have been a fortune!"

So saying, he returned the letter to its original shape, and pressing the folds with his nail, not the least trace remained of the breach of faith he had committed.

There was a knock at the door of the private office.
"Come in!" said Quirk.

His grandson, Sir Phineas Briancourt, made his appearance; he had just returned from Cambridge, for the long vacation.

The old man welcomed him warmly. He was the only being on earth whom he loved; for in the person of his descendant he saw the realization of the scheme of pride and ambition which it had been the labour of his life to achieve.

The baronet resembled his grandfather no less in mind than in person—the same cold, calculating, subtle nature. From the hour of his birth, not one generous impulse had ever warmed his heart. With his equals or superiors in rank, he was timid and cringing; to his inferiors, haughty and overbearing. Wealth was his idol: although the Briancourt estates, released by the death of his father from the incumbrances which had so long pressed upon them, were ample for the support of his dignity, he sighed for the property of Broadlands, the revenues of which were regularly drawn by the bankers of the dowager.

"Ah, Sir Phineas!" exclaimed the lawyer—his grandfather always addressed him by his title; "when did you arrive in town?"

"This morning," replied the young man, shaking him by the hand. "Lord George Cavendish and Blakeney wanted me to join them in a tour on the Continent, but I preferred passing my vacation with you!"

Quirk smiled, for his affection was flattered by the choice.

"Besides," continued the speaker, "it would have been so very expensive; and till I am master of Broadlands, I can ill afford it!"

For the first time, perhaps, in his life, the man of law felt mortified at the extreme prudence of his descendant—for it destroyed the illusion that regard for him had influenced his decision.

"Broadlands," he said, "must one day be yours! Could I only discover the retreat of the dowager, I would speedily wring it from her possession!"

"How so?"

"That is my secret, which for the present you had better be unacquainted with! By-the-bye," he added, "I start in a few hours for Moretown Abbey, on private business for the earl: what say you to accompany me?"

"On private business?" repeated the young man, with an expression of interest.

"Yes," continued his relative; "for your sake I interest myself in his affairs—worm into his confidence—for a time may come when he may be useful to you! Independent of his influence in the county, he has a close borough at his disposal—and it has always been my wish to see you in Parliament! Your father, who was a weak-minded man, paid dearly for his seat, and never knew how to turn it to advantage; but I have better hopes of you!" he added.

Sir Phineas smiled—for he was no less vain than ambitious; and it was finally settled between them that they should travel together.

That same evening they started for the north.

When Mademoiselle Athalie was informed of the result of the application to the Chancellor, her fury and disappointment exceeded even those of her dupe: he only regretted the loss of the fortune—she, the downfall of her long-cherished scheme of becoming Countess of Moretown; for she felt assured that the earl, bitterly as he hated his unoffending wife, and subservient as he had proved himself to the caprices of his mistress, would never consent to the employment of any means which would deprive him of the Riddle estate, now more than ever necessary to maintain his influence in the county.

Athalie was one of those women whose passions, like a torrent, overleaped alike the barriers of virtue and discretion. She resolved not to resign the brilliant prospect of a marriage with the earl without a struggle—and that very day wrote a long and urgent letter to Dr. Briard, promising him a large sum of money whenever it should please Providence—as she hypocritically expressed it—to remove her victim.

"He will catch the bait!" she murmured; "for gold has ever been the key to his sordid heart! Fool that I was ever to unite my fate with such a man! Man," she repeated; "a machine—a calculating fiend—whose only spring of action is self—self!"

The reproach came with a very bad grace from the lips of the Frenchwoman; but the best and wisest of us are seldom just when interest or passion prompts the tongue.

Her letter left London a few hours only before Quirk and his grandson started on their journey.

(To be continued.)

NEW ENGLISH CHURCH IN BERLIN.—A new Protestant English church is to be built in Berlin in the Victoria Strasse. Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess of Prussia has largely contributed towards the funds for its erection.

CALIFORNIAN PYRAMID.—A curious and interesting discovery has recently been made in California, of a pyramid very similar in construction to the Egyptian pyramids, only very much smaller. The stones composing the courses average six feet in length, and from one to three feet in thickness.

THE OLDEST MARRIED COUPLE IN THE WORLD.—There are living in Marulan, in this colony, two persons, husband and wife, aged respectively 111 and 107 years. They are extremely feeble and bedridden, but are in possession of both sight and hearing. The old man arrived in the first fleet in 1788, and has consequently been 75 years in New South Wales.—*Sydney (N.S.W.) Empire.*

BIG BEN.—The great bell of the Houses of Parliament is once more announcing the time from the Clock Tower of Westminster Bridge. It was discovered on examination by the founders, Messrs. Meares, that it was not so cracked as people imagined, and consequently it has again been set to work. The

crack did not pass completely through the metal, and though the tones are rather subdued, they are distinctly audible to distant parts of the metropolis.

SUBSTITUTE FOR COTTON.—We are informed that a substitute for cotton has been discovered by a firm in Liverpool, with which length of fibre, delicacy, elasticity and great strength are equal, at least, to Indian cotton. It can be produced to any amount at 6d. per pound. It has been patented in France; and its applicability and utility are so evident, that the Minister of the Interior has intimated his intention of forwarding its use by all means in his power.

SCIENCE.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MOON.—Dr. Henry Draper, of New York, has taken a photograph of the moon nearly three feet in diameter, made under a power of three hundred and twenty in the telescope. It is the largest that has ever been taken.

COAL AND STEAM POWER.—In a paper read before the British Association on the coal and coke trade of the north of England, Mr. Nicholas Wood said it had been calculated that an acre of coal, four feet in thickness, produced as much carbon as 115 acres of full-grown forest, and that a bushel (84 lbs.) of coal consumed carefully, was capable of raising 70,000,000 lbs. one foot high, and that the combustion of 21 lbs. of coal gave out power sufficient to raise a man to the summit of Mont Blanc. The aggregate steam-power of Great Britain he sets down at 83,635,214 horse-power, or equal to 400,000,000 of men.

THE COTTON PLANT IN ITALY.—A report from royal commissioners has lately been presented to the Italian Government on the cultivation of the cotton plant in Southern Italy. About 80,000 bales of cotton have been grown during the past season in the latter district, including Sicily. This quantity would, it is said, have been trebled, had it not been for the excessive drought that prevailed. The attempts hitherto made to grow the celebrated Sea Island cotton have failed; the quality produced is however very good, returning a profit to the cultivator, at the present price of cotton, of £20 an acre. A very satisfactory feature of the report is the favourable nature of a vast area of Central and Southern Italy for the growth of cotton. There is very little doubt that Southern Italy alone could easily furnish 550,000 bales of excellent cotton annually, which exceeds by 50,000 bales the quantity produced by South Carolina. The insignificant quantity of cotton now grown in Italy is the more remarkable, when it is remembered that during the last century it was cultivated as far north as Tuscany, and was so abundant, that during the wars of Napoleon the First, and the continental blockade, Italy supplied almost the whole of Europe with cotton. The plant was especially grown around Naples, and was known in commerce as Castellamare cotton.

STEEL AS A MATERIAL FOR SHIPBUILDING.—Last week two large vessels built of steel were launched from the building yard of Messrs. Jones, Queeggan, and Co., at Liverpool. One was a sailing ship named the *Formby*, of 1,271 tons tonnage, built for the East India trade; the other a paddlewheel steamer named the *Hope*, of 1,492 tons. As a *déjeuner* which took place after the launch Mr. Jones made some remarks on these vessels. He said that steel is much stronger than iron, weight for weight, and consequently in shipbuilding that equal strength can be given with less weight of steel than of iron. The strain resisted by iron built ships had been found to be from 19 to 20 tons per square inch, while the resistance of steel is found to range from 42 to 48, giving a mean of 45 tons for steel, or considerably more than double that of iron. Keeping these results in view, the *Formby*, a vessel built of steel, required 500 tons of material in her hull, while a similar ship made of iron would have required 800 tons. The difference in weight of hull would cause a difference of nearly two feet in displacement in favour of the steel vessel, requiring also less propelling power. In the case of steamers the advantages were still more obviously in favour of steel. If the *Persia*, a steamer of 3,600 tons and 900-horse power, had been built of steel instead of iron, her displacement would have been diminished about one-sixth, and she would have been enabled to carry double her present cargo. Mr. J. Reed, the chief constructor in the royal navy, who was present, said he should watch with great interest the career of the two ships which had just been launched. He remarked that merchant ships can be built to test a principle when war ships cannot, as the former can be examined and repaired annually, while the latter are sent abroad for periods of three or four years. He perfectly agreed with what had been said of the importance of steel for the construction of small ships, and stated that the Government took great interest in the question of employing steel as a material for shipbuilding.



[SIR RASHLEIGH FINDS A CLUE.]

SIBYL'S CLIFF.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO LETTERS.

LEAVING Sir Rashleigh and the heir of Oakland Manor engaged in their death-struggle for the present, we may presume that the weary, footsore wayfarer, who halted to rest at the gates, and surveyed through a vista the stately pile of architecture, the long range of stables and kennels, the far-reaching conservatory, the trimly-kept walks and flowering shrubbery, the statues and the fountains—all the grandeur of accumulated years, all the luxury of ample wealth, doubtless envied the inmates of the mansion, and regarded their abode a terrestrial paradise. Yet had he known the secrets of the family—how disappointment and anxiety marred the health of its head; how horror on horror pressed upon the brain of its presumptive heir; what griefs and annoyances each one of the household bore, he would have turned away with a shudder, and thanked Providence for the appetite that gave his crust of bread a relish, and for the clear conscience that crowned his nights—even though passed under the roof of an out-house—with invigorating slumber. Sir Rashleigh himself would willingly have changed conditions with the poorest beggar that ever asked a crust at the hall door.

As days rolled on, Sir George Franklin's anxiety at his son not returning still continuing, Sir Rashleigh, in order to secure himself in the favour of Sir George, began deliberately to blacken the memory of Arthur and ruin his fame. Nothing short of this could render the plotter secure in his person and his prospects. To this fell purpose he now bent all his energies.

After long deliberation, he determined that the absent heir should be his own accuser—and that could only be accomplished by a resort to forgery. He had access to a cabinet in which, among other papers, Sir George Franklin had preserved a file of his son's letters, written during short absences from the manor-house, the last dates but a few days previous to his final flight ten years before. Sir Rashleigh was an adroit penman, and after a careful study of the manuscript, and a little practice, felt sure that he could imitate the handwriting very closely. Even if the imitation did not tally exactly with the original in every respect, the slight difference would be readily accounted for by the change which takes place in a man's handwriting during the long period of ten years. Certain peculiarities in the formation of certain letters, which are apt

to be adhered to during a lifetime, and which served to identify the writing, the forger succeeded in reproducing to perfection. The evil account to which he turned his dexterity will be hereafter shown.

The old baronet and his nephew were seated one morning opposite to each other at the breakfast-table, when a servant entered with two letters, one bearing the post-mark of a remote country town, and addressed to Sir George Franklin, the other a letter from France, directed to Sir Rashleigh.

The old baronet started when his eyes fell upon the superscription, and he eagerly tore the missive open. His nephew, while apparently engaged in reading his own letter, furtively watched the features of the old man over the margin of his sheet. His eyes were fixed intently upon the page, and the colour went and came as they followed the lines; the paper shook in his hands as if they had been paralyzed. When he had finished the perusal, he looked up, and motioned to the servant who was in attendance to leave the room.

"I hope you have received no ill news, uncle," said Sir Rashleigh; "you seem agitated."

"Read that letter!" said the baronet, as he tossed it across the table.

Sir Rashleigh attentively perused it, though he already knew every line of it by heart. It bore the date of the current month, but not the name of any town.

"When this letter reaches your hands," it said, "I shall be far away from the town where it is mailed, far away from England, even, never to return. You will recall, sir, the circumstances of my brief visit, after an absence of ten years, to your home—the home of my ancestors. I was admitted by the housekeeper, a staunch friend—and made my way to your bedside. You received me kindly and generously; the only pledge you required of me being the solemn assurance that I had never disgraced the family name. When I gave you that assurance, I equivocated. I said to myself, that the sins I had committed were done when I bore another name than mine. I was therefore false, even in the moment when you trusted me most."

"It was my purpose to practise upon your credulity yet further. I had resolved, that if you received me kindly, I would return and live under your roof, bringing with me my wife and child. But I could no more live content under your roof than a fiend could live content in paradise. I am utterly weaned from old associations—have formed other ties and habits from which I cannot break myself. The daily honesty of your life, the example which my cousin sets the world, would be a perpetual reproach to me; for you

must know that I have abandoned the principles you taught me, and am unrepentant. I have disgraced my family—and have married a woman more infamous than myself."

"My very appearance beneath your roof was a lie. The sordid clothes I wore were assumed to move your pity. I have ample means at my command; how obtained, I will not shock your ears by repeating. I go abroad to enjoy the fruits of many a guilty enterprise, in such a way as my tastes counsel, and my present associations lead. But do not fear that I shall ever resume my family name. That and my birthright I renounce henceforth. I might have withheld this confession, but the memory of your majestic presence, of your undeserved kindness, has impelled me, for once, to speak the truth. Look upon me as one lost to all his old friends—not by the force of circumstances, but by his own imperious will; yet, in the midst of your just indignation, give me credit for one honourable impulse, the first experienced for many years—a weakness which would disgrace me for ever were it known by my present friends. Hope not ever to reclaim me—a man of my years never changes."

"ARTHUR."

The letter dropped from Sir Rashleigh's hands. "I cannot understand this," he said.

"Not understand it!" cried Sir George, fiercely. "To me it is as plain as if the fires of the lower regions were running through every line."

"But that Arthur—my old playmate, kinsman, friend—should be changed—changed in his whole nature—seems inconceivable."

"Your principles are so fixed, Rashleigh, that you cannot understand how a man's nature is capable of being so warped. I, with a broader experience of life, unfortunately comprehend it."

"But my poor cousin may repent, sir; he may come back really contrite—not hypocritically, as it appears he did the other night."

"Rashleigh," said the old man, his features convulsed with emotion, "he knelt at my bedside, he sobbed like a broken-hearted child—his behaviour would have deceived the wisest man that ever lived. You would have taken him to your heart, as I did."

"Assuredly, sir; and I feel convinced that he will come back again."

"Rashleigh, if he dared again to present himself before me, if it were the last act of my life, I would strike him to my feet, and then spurn him from my door like a dog."

"Let me entreat, sir," said Sir Rashleigh, "that in spite of the wild words of this letter—written under I know not what inspiration, probably that of the infam-

ous woman with whom he says he has connected himself, you will not harden your heart against poor Arthur."

"Rashleigh, I love you," said the old man, "but if you would not forfeit my affection, never mention that name again, never remind me that I once had a son—I have none now."

"Ah, sir!" said Sir Rashleigh, with as much tenderness of manner as he was capable of simulating, "if you will permit me to be a son to you, you shall never have cause to complain that I am lacking in affection or gratitude."

"I believe you, Rashleigh," said the old man, wringing his hands; "but you never can be—here he fairly broke down, and turning away his head, sobbed like a child."

After some minutes he looked towards his nephew again. The traces of tears had been brushed from his cheeks, but the signet of ineradicable sorrow had been imprinted on his noble features.

"Rashleigh," said he, with a feeble attempt at resuming his old bluff manner, "this has shaken me worse than the fall I got when the sorrel mare rolled me into the Drystone Gully. Ah, me! I shall never hunt again. What a hard rider he used to be. Confound him! to think of his turning out so. But I have my senses about me still, boy, and you shall see that I'm able to attend to business yet. I want you, Rashleigh, to mount your horse and ride over to Claremont. Find Middleton, my lawyer, and tell him I must see him immediately. Tell him I have a job for him. Don't let the grass grow under your horse's heels."

Sir Rashleigh Brandon needed no prompting to spur him up to expedition. His cruel fraud had more than answered his expectations. It was very evident that his uncle was fully satisfied of the unworthiness of his son, had really resolved to renounce him, and to make him, Sir Rashleigh, his heir. The exultation of this certainty banished for a time the terrors that had beset him for so many days and nights. His conscience was, perhaps, getting hardened.

As he galloped towards Claremont, he read a second time the letter with the foreign postmark, which he had received at the breakfast-table. It was quite oracular in its tone, written evidently for the purpose of misleading anyone who had no right to peruse it, should it chance to fall into such hands. We subjoin a transcript of this curious epistle.

"Maurice's Hotel, Paris, &c."

"This city is delightful for a residence, but confoundingly expensive. The gentleman whom you recently obliged with a loan, is very anxious to increase his indebtedness. There are more secrets than one in the world; and valuable secrets are not to be had for nothing. For instance, if a gentleman is heir to a handsome property, and there are troublesome claimants to it, whom he can buy or frighten off, it is worth his while to ascertain the whereabouts of those claimants, or they may give him future trouble. A word to the wise—*verbum sap. satis*—a word is as good as a wink to a blind horse." The Chevalier St. George would be very happy to see—nay, must see Sir R. B. at his hotel within a very few days. Sir R. B. will confess that the information the Chevalier St. George has to impart for a consideration is well worth, not only the advance required, but the trouble of even a longer and more toilsome journey.

"The scoundrel would not dare to trifle with me," muttered Sir Rashleigh, as he tore the letter into fragments, and scattered them at intervals along the road. "He has some valuable information, and I suppose I must obey his summons. This is a matter for reflection, however."

He found Mr. Middleton at Claremont, delivered the baronet's message, and was told that the lawyer would order his gig immediately, and accompany Sir Rashleigh back to the manor-house.

Meanwhile, the housekeeper and the butler, whose amicable relations had been restored, on the distinct understanding, however, of a purely Platonic and friendly intercourse, were engaged in conversation, when they heard the noise of a heavy fall in the breakfast-room. Alarmed and anxious, they both hastened at once to the spot; on throwing open the door, they beheld Sir George Franklin stretched at length upon the floor, apparently lifeless.

"This is an awful spectacle!" cried the butler, holding up his hands.

"Don't stand there, gaping and gazing!" said the housekeeper, sharply; "but loosen his cravat, while I get some water. Sir George has had a fit."

The butler obeyed the directions of the quick-witted woman, while Mrs. Bell bathed the baronet's temples with water. Then, as she was trying to restore circulation by chafing his hands, which were tightly clenched together, she noticed that one of them held fast a crumpled letter. After the lapse of some moments, Sir George opened his eyes and looked about him.

"Are you better, sir?" asked the housekeeper.

He nodded.

"Shall I send for a medical attendant, sir?"

"No," said Sir George, emphatically. "This is nothing—I felt dizzy—an oppression. Glosser, help me into my chair, and then you can leave the room. Mrs. Bell, I wish to speak to you a moment."

Solomon Glosser placed his master in the chair, and then, with profound reverence, withdrew. His pride was rather hurt. There was some mystery prevailing, and Sir George had shown undue partiality for the housekeeper, in selecting her as a confidante and counsellor.

"It is very plain," thought the butler, "that Sir George is a failin' fast. Hevidently there is some think on his mind. He is burdened with a secret—perhaps a awful secret, and he chooses to commit it to a woman. His intellect is hobviously leavin' him."

With this reflection, he retired, solemnly, to solace his affliction with a glass of wine in the pantry.

"Mrs. Bell," said the baronet, when they were left together, "your long and faithful services have entitled you to my entire confidence."

"I have always tried to do my duty, Sir George, by you and yours."

"You have always done more than your duty, and hence, I have for years regarded you more as a friend and member of my family than a domestic. You have known all its secrets and sorrows."

He paused, as if to master some strong emotion, and then continued:

"I have had a severe shock this morning—one that nearly overcame me. You will ascertain what I have suffered when you have read that letter."

He handed her the crumpled letter, which he had retained ever since Sir Rashleigh had given it back to him, and the housekeeper, retiring to the embrasure of the window, put on her spectacles, and slowly and carefully perused it. After she had done so, she gave it back to him, folded up her spectacles and put them in her pocket.

"Have you read it?" asked the baronet.

"Every word of it, Sir George."

"And what do you think of him, now?"

"I never thought ill of him."

"Do you mean," cried Sir George, the colour mounting to his cheek, "that after such a shameless avowal as that, you dare to defend him still?"

"I care not what the letter says, Sir George—but Arthur Franklin pressed his lips to my cheek, on the night when he was here, and I felt the pressure of his warm hand, and I looked into his frank face, and I saw there the traces of sorrow and privation, but not the brand of shame and guilt."

"Pshaw! you are a woman, and talk and reason like a woman," cried Sir George, impatiently; "or rather you don't reason at all. You place the plausible words and smooth looks of an adventurer against his own written confession."

"I am guided by my heart, Sir George—and that tells me I am right."

"Against the evidence of your senses, woman."

"My conscience is a surer guide than my senses."

"You do not mean to say that is not his handwriting?"

"I should say it was."

"Then you are simply credulous, and obstinate, and irrational."

"That letter may have been written by my dear boy's hand—but he may have been compelled to do it by some enemy in whose power he was."

"So you think it may have been written under duress? But do you reflect that if he were good and true, he would never aim such a stab at a father's heart?"

"Not if he were made to believe that you were in danger too?"

"Such a combination of circumstances would be impossible. My mind revolts from your theory as wholly irrational."

"Then may not that letter be an adroit forgery?"

"By whom forged? For what purpose?"

"You drive me to the wall, Sir George. I cannot, as you say, reason. A woman is guided by her heart, but, nine times out of ten, she is right; a man always by his reason, and often, alas, how often, he goes astray. There is something within me that tells me there is some terrible mystery about that letter; something which tells me that nothing ought to shake my faith in Mr. Arthur. Poor boy! where is he, and what has become of him?"

"Remember," said the baronet, sternly, that I have discarded him, and that it is my wish his name should never be mentioned again in my presence."

"I am ready to obey all your orders, Sir George; but you cannot prevent my thinking of him. And since you have admitted me into your confidence, let me implore you to do nothing rash in consequence of the reception of that letter, or anything which it contains. I am guided solely by what I feel; but by all that you hold sacred, by the memory of my dear mistress, now a saint in heaven, do not be merciless to your only son

Even if the worst is true, he may repent; he may have magnified his own misdeeds."

"But he describes his wife as infamous. No man would do that unless the charge were true."

"No man would ever make such a charge to his father."

"You are incorrigible, Mrs. Bell," said the baronet, impatiently. "It only irritates me to talk with you."

"I ask your pardon humbly, Sir George, but you solicited my opinion. I did not obtrude it on you."

"Enough! enough!" said Sir George, waving his hand. "You have succeeded in perplexing me, now leave me quiet. I am expecting my man of business."

When the housekeeper had left, Sir George folded up the fatal letter, endorsed the date of its reception, and placed it in his pocket-book. He then sat down, and awaited the arrival of the messenger. Before a great while, the lawyer's gig, and Sir Rashleigh's horse appeared, and they soon presented themselves in person to the baronet. The latter thanked his nephew for his promptness, and was then closeted with his attorney. Sir Rashleigh awaited the minutes of their absence. His face brightened as the time wore on. It was evident they were seriously engaged. A will involving thousands of pounds worth of property cannot be despatched in a moment. Mrs. Bell and Glosser were sent for to come into the library, as witnesses, of course. They soon re-appeared. At last Mr. Middleton came out of the library.

"You will stay to dinner, of course, Mr. Middleton?" said Sir Rashleigh.

"No, thank ye," said the lawyer, glancing at his watch. "Let me see: by this time, a client of mine, a chawbacon, who is bent on ruining himself by a lawsuit about a worthless piece of property, must have been cooling his heels for three-quarters of an hour in my office. But he may console himself with the reflection that a baronet takes precedence of a ploughman. Fine property this of your uncle's, Sir Rashleigh?"

"It is, indeed."

"Good morning, Sir Rashleigh."

"Good morning, Mr. Middleton."

The lawyer gone, the baronet appeared. He was wonderfully calm, after the severe trial he had undergone that morning.

"Rashleigh," he said, placing his hand affectionately on his nephew's shoulder, "you are now the only one of my family to be my stay or support. If you too fail me—"

"I should deserve eternal infamy."

"Sir Rashleigh," pursued the baronet, "never, if you love me, breathe the name of— You know who I mean."

Sir Rashleigh sighed deeply. There was no danger of his calling up that name.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE TRAIL.

It was some time before Sir George Franklin had sufficiently recovered from the shock he had received, to enable his nephew to absent himself from the manor house. At last, however, the old man settled down into a quiescent state, resumed the old routine of his habits, and busied himself in his usual vocation. He even remounted a steady-going old hunting hack, and rode about the park and grounds.

It was then that Sir Rashleigh, avowing that he had heard of the serious illness of an old classmate at Paris, solicited permission to pay a few days' visit to that city. The nephew and uncle had so few tastes in common—the former was so cold and reserved—that Sir George always felt a sort of vague relief during his absence, and hence he opposed no obstacle to his departure. His usual generosity manifested itself on the eve of his leaving the manor-house. He presented Sir Rashleigh with a well-filled purse, and a large draft on an English banker at Paris.

"Paris is an expensive city, lad," said the old baronet, "and though you're naturally close, yet while there I don't wish you to disgrace the family name by anything niggardly."

Sir Rashleigh travelled without a servant. He made a rapid journey to Dover, had a quick passage to Calais, and posted on to Paris, lavishing money on the postillions, to secure rapid driving. In fact, whatever he did now-a-days was done with feverish velocity.

Once the sight of the great centre of modern civilization and refinement would have sent a thrill through even his cold heart; but now, when the postillion, checking his horses on the brow of a hill, pointed with his whip to the huge agglomeration of domes, pinnacles, spires, and chimneys that filled the valley of the Seine, and turning on the saddle, said, with the proud dignity of an exultant native, "Behold Paris, monsieur!" Sir Rashleigh only answered—"Drive on." His was the feeling of Beranger's "Wandering Jew":

Ever, ever,
Turns the earth o'er which I wander—
Ever—ever—ever.

He was driven by his orders directly to Meurice's Hotel, where, as the postilion took care to inform the people that he was a "Miford Anglaise," who "lashed guineas like a prince," he was the recipient of the "most distinguished consideration," as the diplomatists say. He was installed in splendid apartments on the second story, and the gentlemanly proprietor of the establishment condescended to wait on him in person.

Sir Rashleigh was not usually affable, or fond of cultivating acquaintance with strangers; but he departed from his usual custom on this occasion, insisted on the landlord's sitting down, and abandoning all his English *hauteur*, gossiped and chatted away in a style which would have done honour to a Frenchman. A perfect master of the Gallic tongue, he sounded his visitor by his fluency and the purity of his accent.

"Pardon, monsieur," said the landlord, "but you are not an Englishman?"

"An Englishman born and bred," replied Sir Rashleigh.

"But, at least, you must have resided many years in Paris?"

"I was never here in my life before."

"But you have certainly resided in France before?"

"Never."

"Then it is really wonderful—a miracle, Sir Brandon!"

"What is a miracle, my friend?"

"Your pronunciation and accent. If you had chosen to represent yourself a Frenchman—nay, a Parisian—Sir Brandon, no one could have detected you!"

"You flatter me."

"My word of honour, Sir Brandon! Ah, a very different person was a countryman of yours who has been staying here lately. He called himself the Chevalier de St. George, and claimed to be a Frenchman. But I am sorry to say he was English all over—not a representative Englishman, my faith! but a disgrace to your magnificent country."

"Really!" said Sir Rashleigh, who feigned indifference.

"To think of his rascality, monsieur! At first he appeared to be a man of wealth, and paid his accounts punctually. You know we do business here entirely on the cash system. Well, sir, in spite of that, he ran up a very large bill, on the strength of being disappointed in remittances from England; and, finally, he disappeared between two days. I was displeased, but I consoled myself because he had left behind him an enormous trunk, very heavy, which he had assured me was full of valuables. After his departure I obtained a commissary of police and opened the trunk. Figure to yourself, Sir Brandon, my despair when I found this receptacle to be filled with paving-stones, of no value except to the street commissioner. The trick had not even the merit of being original, but the thought that it had been played off successfully at Meurice's carried with it the poignancy of despair.

For a little moment, monsieur, I assure you, on my word of honour, I had the idea of committing suicide. But I was deterred, not by the want of courage—for what is it to commit suicide, monsieur, but to crook your forefinger on a bit of steel, and *pruf! boum!* you are in the other world? it is an affair all simple, see you—but by the thought of the consternation such an event would create throughout the world entire. For, see you, without vanity, Meurice's is the centre of the world civilized. And as our Louis the Grand said, 'the state is myself.' Here meet the diplomatists of the world, and here are carried on the intrigues by which the fate of empires is decided. Where would these world-managers meet, if Meurice's were annihilated? and if my logic is correct, the annihilation of myself would be the annihilation of Meurice's. What an imbroglio would ensue! The equilibrium of Europe—the balance of power, would be destroyed. The throne of Louis Philippe would be shaken; Russia would become aggressive; Austria, Spain, Poland, Italy, Greece, Great Britain, would all be thrown into inextricable confusion! a general war would ensue, chaos come again, and civilization put back two centuries at least. All these considerations, monsieur, flashed upon the mind of one who has the dignity of his profession—I abandoned the thought of suicide, and Europe and civilization were saved."

"But I suppose you made no effort to track your fugitive debtor, sir?"

"Did I not, Sir Brandon? Pardon—but I have put upon his quest all the keenest *mouchards* of the police."

"And have you obtained any tidings of him?"

The landlord shook his head.

"Paris is a queer old city," he said. "It is full of hiding-places and rat-holes. The dangerous classes number thirty or forty thousand—an army, see you—most of them banded and affiliated together, with

secret oaths and signs and passwords. There are escaped galley-slaves who cannot be retaken; murderers who will never mount the platform of the guillotine; absconding debtors, like this Chevalier St. George, who will never see the inside of the Clink—that, you know, Sir Brandon, is the house of detention for those rogues."

"Well, sir," said Sir Rashleigh, "all I can say is that I hope your efforts in the cause of justice will be crowned with success. I thank you for giving me so much of your valuable time, but beg you will no longer neglect your duties for my entertainment."

The hint was taken, and the grandiloquent landlord bowed himself out of the room.

The prospect before Sir Rashleigh was a rather discouraging one. He had come to Paris to find a man who, it appeared, had eluded the search of its famed and vigilant police. But he was not a man easily daunted by difficulties. His training and principles had taught him to surmount them; and he had ever been accustomed to behold circumstances yield to the force of his imperious will. He was resolved that they should do so in this instance. Besides, there was something in his present condition which rendered such a pursuit necessary to prevent his mind from preying on itself. Himself hunted down by a ghostly follower, invisible to all eyes but his; there was a certain relief in his becoming himself the pursuer of another. In traversing the lower strata of Parisian society, he could not fail to find distraction and occupation. He must necessarily, he thought, to a certain degree, forget himself; and to escape from himself was a positive gain.

The next day he set forth on his wanderings. The obscurer quarters of Paris, the low *cabarets* and *cotillions* were explored cursorily in the way of a general reconnaissance. He thus gained a considerable knowledge of the city. In the evening he visited some of the minor theatres, and some of the *casinos* and cheap ball-rooms. There was nothing compromising in this, for foreigners of position are to be met with in every haunt of Paris, for the purpose or pretext of "seeing life," and "studying human nature." He took no especial care to disguise himself; for, he argued, if it was interest to discover Konrad, it was no less the interest of Konrad to discover him. If he wanted Konrad's secret, on the other hand, Konrad wanted his money, and would be sure to be on the look-out for him.

The first day's quest was productive of no result. The second day's search, was equally discouraging; but on the third day, chance threw in his way a clue. He had stepped among a group of idlers and *faneurs*, errand boys lingering in their course, milliners' girls in charge of handboxes, street-loafers who had nothing better to do, and fogle-hunters in quest of handkerchiefs, at the window of a picture-shop where a good many cheap daubs, in staring gilt frames, were exhibited. Among these was a sketch of rather more than ordinary merit. It represented a group of revellers carousing in a wine-cellar, and one of the men thrown into high relief by the light of a gas-jet, was, in face and figure, the perfect likeness of Konrad. He must have sat for the likeness.

He passed into the shop, and accosted the proprietor.

"Can you tell me, sir, who painted that picture of the wine-bibbers at your window?"

"A Monsieur—Monsieur—plague on it! I can't seem to recall his name. Does monsieur wish to purchase it? The price is one hundred francs, including the frame, and it is a good bargain; for monsieur, who is evidently a connoisseur, sees that it has merit."

"I wish to see the painter, sir."

"I can't recall his name at present; my memory is very faulty."

"You have a commission for selling it?" said Sir Rashleigh.

"Yes, monsieur, twenty francs," replied the picture-dealer, with great alacrity.

"Well, I agree to take the picture; and to bind the bargain, here is your commission," said Sir Rashleigh, handing the money to the man. "I will call again and tell you where to send it. I am sorry you don't happen to remember the painter's name and address."

"How stupid I am!" cried the picture-dealer, smiting his forehead. "Of course, my memorandum-book will tell the facts at once."

He opened a waste-book, turned to a certain page, and immediately said:

"Napoleon Bruno, No. 69, Rue des Tenebres, sixth story."

"Thank you," said Sir Rashleigh, noting down the address. "I will call again and pay you for the picture."

(To be continued.)

SAXE-COBURG.—It has been already stated that the Prince of Wales has renounced for himself and his heirs all right of succession to the Duchies of Coburg and Gotha, and that this renunciation has been re-

ceived by the joint Diet of both divisions of the country. It is now announced that King Leopold of Belgium has recognized the act of renunciation in his quality as guardian to Prince Alfred, Prince Arthur, and Prince Leopold.

THE COMMAND OF WORDS.—A statistician has had the patience to count the number of words employed by the most celebrated writers. The works of Corneille do not contain more than 7,000 different words, and those of Molière 8,000. Shakespeare, the most fertile and varied of English authors, wrote all his tragedies and comedies with 15,000 words. Voltaire and Goethe employ 20,000; "Paradise Lost" only contains 8,000; and the Old Testament says all that it has to say with 5,642.

MEDICINES, THEIR IMPURITIES AND ADULTERATIONS.

THE *Lancet*, lately gave the results of the examination of thirty-one samples of the spirit of nitric ether purchased in the metropolis. After giving the results of the analysis, our contemporary says:—"It appears, therefore,—1st. That the whole of the samples were acid, the degree of acidity, as represented by the quantity of anhydrous carbonate of soda required to neutralize them, ranging, between 45-100th per 1,000 grs. of spirit and 14·4 grs., a very large amount. This acidity was due partly to the oxidation of the alcohol, partly to that of the aldehyde present, and in part to the liberation of some acid compound of nitrogen, as nitric oxide, hyponitrous and nitrous acids. 2nd. That nearly all the samples contained aldehyde. In two samples the quantity was trifling; in eight, it was small; in five, more considerable; while in six, the amount was large.

By an examination of the analyses, it will be seen that, as might have been expected, the amount of aldehyde stands frequently in close relation with that of the acidity, the two usually increasing together. 3rd. That of the 31 samples, 26 contained surplus water, varying in amount from 3 or 4 per cent. to upwards of 34 per cent., or more than one-third. 4th. That a large proportion of the samples had the taste and smell of methylated spirit of nitre. The price of the best spirit of nitric ether is 8s. per lb., while that of the methylated spirit is only 8d. or 9d. per lb. 5th. That of the whole of the spirits of nitre examined, two only reached the pharmacopoeial standard of strength. Highly adulterated as are many of the samples noticed in this report, we have good reason for stating that others still worse may not unfrequently be met with. We know of one case in which the article has a specific gravity of over .952, and more than one-half of which, therefore, consists of water. The very worst samples are, we believe, vended to the poor in pennyworths. It may be affirmed, therefore, of this, one of the most important medicines in the Pharmacopoeia, that, as sold in the metropolis, it is in a very deteriorated and adulterated condition."

LETTER OF GARIBALDI.—The Provincial Council of Potenza (one of the Neapolitan provinces afflicted with brigandage) a short time since unanimously voted a subsidy to the Polish revolution and a monument to Garibaldi. Garibaldi, in a letter published in the *Diritto*, applauds the subsidy, but declines the monument. "As to the monument to me," he says, "I beg you will dismiss the thought of it. If you insist, you will put me to the pain of saying that I will not accept it. As long as the soldiers of two foreign armies riot on our soil, as long as a stream of civil blood flows from the Tronto to the Strait, as long as the glorious remains of our national battles die of hunger or by their own hand in the midst of the insane rejoicings of our cities, as long as the boy wants a school and the orphan an asylum, as long as there is in Italy misery, chains, and darkness, speak not of monuments, least of all of a monument to me."

AN INDIAN DEATH.—I went with one of the clerks into the Hudson's Bay Company's store, where a group of Indians were waiting to obtain their supplies. Among them I observed a woman, who stood aloof until the others were served, and then repeated some words in Indian in a low tone of voice. I found that she asked for a winding-sheet for her husband, whose death she expected at sunset. I followed her to the beach, and saw her husband lying at the bottom of a boat, with two or three Indians near him waiting for the tide. As we approached he turned his head round, looked at me, then at his wife, then at the winding-sheet which she carried on her arm. The eyes of the sick man rested for a few moments on his shroud, and then turned to the setting sun. The wife stepped into the boat, and, taking her place at the feet of her husband, rolled up the cloth, and, placing it upon her knees, sat motionless as a statue. A dog sat on one of the seats of the boat; every now and then he raised his head, and howled low and long, as if he were baying at the sun. I turned away, not wishing to intrude

upon the silent sorrows of the poor Indians; and on looking back, when some distance from the shore, I saw them still in the same position, and heard again the long low howl of the apparently conscious dog, bidding farewell to the sun, which at that moment dipped below the western waves. Early on the next morning I went to look for the boat, but it was gone. I inquired of some Indians who were just returning with a seal they had shot in the harbour, whether the man was dead; they said, "No, not when they started, but he'll die to-morrow night."—*Explorations in the Interior of the Labrador Peninsula. By Henry Youle Hind, M.A., F.R.G.S.*

THE CHILLINGHAM BALL.

"I AM afraid it is no mistake. I do love him. I know myself at last; but I will not do myself dishonour, I will not let myself be jealous, ill-tempered, or mean, if I can help it."

Mary Pembroke was seated at her dressing-table, looking full at the mirror, as if she would read through her own eyes straight down into her soul. She was not gifted with fine or over-sensitive feelings, or she might have followed up these words spoken in her heart, by laying out a map of her future life, all desolate and waste, as a poor disappointed maiden's life would seem to be, until the picture had become too much for endurance, and she had buried her face in her hands and wept passionately over a future before which the eye of faith veils itself in silence and humility. She did not do this—she merely wiped two large tears from her eyes, and smoothed carefully the soft braids of her brown hair.

"I will not do myself dishonour," she said, "nor show that I am only a fair-weather Christian."

She rose then, and knelt down by the white coverlid of her tiny bed, and asked for strength, meaning to use it.

It was the morning of the Chillingham ball, and in the days which preceded the railroad age, when neighbourhoods were confined in fixed circles, this was an event of vital importance to the society which looked upon Chillingham as its central town. For years past that society had computed time by its Chillingham balls, as the Greeks by Olympiads. No young lady was considered to have reached a marriageable age until she had made her first appearance there, and was to her aching heart as the years went by, if they still compelled her to appear there unmarried, for there was a dreadful reckoning kept against her on the side-seats where the dowagers rested, dowagers who well remembered her first appearance, when she must have been eighteen at least.

Broad as the ordeal was, and willingly as many would have avoided it, it is not to be wondered at if mothers led their children there the first time with aching and anxious hearts, judging from their knowledge of the banking-book at home how little provision would be left for them when the bread-winner's hand should have ceased to work, and knowing that this appearance would test the world's opinion of them. Good children, they are perhaps educated to make careful housekeepers and dutiful wives; but what will the world say of them, they wonder, as they glance round the room with a slight sinking of the heart, lest, when they have brought the daughters they love so well, for a little innocent amusement, they may be suspected of bringing their wares to market.

With feelings as keen as any other mother's, Mrs. Pembroke had looked forward to Mary's second appearance; and, until the last few days, she had anticipated a little triumph which should renew the hours of her own youth.

Mr. Pembroke was one of the chief solicitors in the town, and one whose well-tested probity had caused him to be received where his birth and connections would otherwise not have entitled him to notice. Some two or three years before, he had taken Arthur Sandford as a working partner, looking upon him as a young man of merit and industry; but very lately the connection between them had undergone a change. A relative had died, leaving Arthur Sandford a fortune, of which he might have had just expectations, but which he had never been foolish enough to reckon upon, and his place in the firm became a very different one.

From that time Mrs. Pembroke had fancied she detected a change in her attentions to Mary. For years his attachment to her seemed certain, and youth on her side, and undetermined prospects upon his, seemed to far-seeing friends, the only obstacles to their marriage.

During these days of happy intimacy, Mary had not cared to ask the question, which she had so bravely set herself to answer that day, nor had she noted the change her mother had detected until the last week, when a circumstance had assured her at once of her

own state of feeling, and the necessity of conquering it.

Isabella Vaughan—her mother's niece, and the daughter of a rich London merchant—had come to spend the Christmas with them, bringing with her London fashions and small-talk, and enough of her father's money displayed in dress and jewellery to set Chillingham talking of her wit and beauty, although she was not quite so good-looking as Mary thought her. She was older than Mary, and more assured in her manners, and she had evidently set herself to make a conquest of the talented young solicitor, whose new house on the other side of the town was beginning to make people remark.

Now, properly, Arthur Sandford should have shown himself indifferent to the London beauty, but he did not; he fell into the snare as readily as the silly fish seizes the well-baited hook. On some pretence or other, he was constantly at the house, and always the gentleman in attendance on the well-fledged coquette; and yet with a measure of his old caution, too, for he contrived to keep Mary always in their near neighbourhood.

As the Chillingham ball approached, wonderful garments had made their appearance by coach from London for Isabella, while Mary's more modest toilet was doomed to disappointment.

"Mary," Mrs. Pembroke had said to her, "your papa confesses to a slight embarrassment in money matters just now, and has asked me to be careful. I know he never says what is not true, or denies us what he can spare—dear child, can you do without a new dress for the ball?"

Mary considered a moment with blank face, then cleared it rapidly, and said, though with some little effort:

"Oh, yes, mamma dear; the one I wore last year will do quite well."

"Could we get it altered?" anxiously suggested Mrs. Pembroke.

"It will do quite well, mamma," said Mary; "to have it altered will be nearly as expensive as getting a new one. I do not mind it in the least."

So it was that when Mary sat in her little room, pondering over life and its difficulties, her last year's dress lay on the bed. There was a nice little fire, an unusual luxury, burning in the grate, for her mother, guessing, but not interfering with, the struggle going on within her, had thought that she might like to be alone, and had ordered it early.

It had been a pretty dress, but the trimmings were last year's trimmings, so were the sleeves, and that which had been snow-white last year, looked rather yellow as it lay, reminding her of pleasant dances when he, who must be very dear no more, was by her side, listening for her voice above all others.

"I must go down," said Mary, wearily; and she went down to the drawing-room, where she found Isabella and her mother discussing the merits of a beautiful set of pearls, which the former intended to wear with a superb white lace dress over a pink satin petticoat.

Mary came behind them in the gentle dignity of a heart true to itself, and admired the pearls, as who would not?

The door opened, and Mr. Sandford was announced. He entered, carrying two bouquets, one of white and exquisitely scented flowers, and the other composed of different colours, and evidently inferior to the other in beauty. With a courtly little speech of ordinary flattery, he handed the white flowers to Miss Vaughan, and, with a kind of gentlemanly manner, he offered the others to Mary.

She took them with a gentle grace, quietly thanking him, while Isabella overwhelmed him with thanks and praises.

"Mary," she said, "let me see if I do not like yours best—I suppose I may have which I like best, Mr. Sandford?"

"I daresay Miss Pembroke will not object to give you hers, if you prefer it," he said, quietly; "but I think I have chosen the best for you."

Here was an opportunity for Mary to say she did not care for either, but she only said:

"The white one will match your dress with its white ornaments, and it is much the prettier."

"Well, if it is the prettier, I will keep it," said Isabella, coquettishly; "and the red roses will do best with your old dress, dear, will they not?"

"Only a year old," said Mary, smiling, for she saw her mamma was deeply hurt that the fact should be brought before Mr. Sandford's notice, "and it is almost as good as new."

"Fancy!" cried Isabella; "hear her, Mr. Sandford; she says the dress she wore at the last Chillingham ball is as good as new."

"Why did you not have a new dress?" asked Mr. Sandford.

"Papa had other needs for his money this year," said Mary, "and mamma thought my dress would do."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Isabella; "as if papa was

not always making the same outcry. I tell mine I must have money, and I always get what I want."

"Perhaps your papa is richer than mine," said Mary, "but he cannot be kinder or more thoughtful. I would not tease him for the world."

"Your society is so very tempting," said Arthur Sandford, "that I almost forgot I have business to do. Miss Vaughan, will you hold yourself disengaged for the first quadrille to-night?"

"Well, as a reward for such a pretty present, I think I must."

"Good-bye, ladies," he said, and hurried off. "How beautifully you do your back hair, Mary," said Isabella, almost querulously; "I wish I could do mine as well."

"Shall I do yours to-night?" said Mary.

"Oh, I wish you would—with those beautiful plaits, and my black hair would look so nice with them, black hair always dresses so much prettier than brown."

"You must go up early then, my dears," said Mrs. Pembroke, for anxiously she saw Mary's pale cheek. "Mary does not look very well to-night, and I should not like her to look ill at the ball."

Quickly and lovingly Mary looked up—she knew her mother felt for her, and was the more grateful that she did not force her into any confidence, which under the circumstances would be painful to both.

No sister decking another with careful hands could have braided Isabella's hair more tenderly than did Mary that night. Step by step, she walked by faith, not daring to question of to-morrow. Arthur Sandford loved her not, but she must not be unkind or impatient to her he did love, or judge her with over-careful judgment.

The evening came, and when the aristocracy of Chillingham and its neighbourhood had assembled in the large dancing-room at the Angel Inn, Mary dressed in her last year's dress—which, by-the-by, no one remembered, except a few who secretly respected her for wearing it—followed Mr. Sandford and her elegantly dressed cousin into the room, leaning on her father's arm. Her father was not so indifferent to what was going on as he might seem, but deemed her happiness so precious to him, and his dear child so far above all price, that if a word could have recalled Arthur against his will, he would not have uttered it.

The tide had set against Mary that night, however; many who had looked upon her as almost affianced to Arthur pitied her, but wished to be merry, and therefore did not ask her to dance; and as the gay music rattled on, she sat yet by her mother's side, although her gentle looks and patient smile might have attracted any one.

Arthur was dancing with Isabella, and flirting—ah, could such attention be courtship?

Presently they came to her, Isabella laughing, and holding up her beautiful lace dress which had a long rent in it.

"Miss Pembroke," said Arthur (how happy and handsome he looked), "we need you; your cousin has torn her dress, do you mind coming with us to the cloak-room?"

It was said in that tone which implies that all the world must give way to one person.

"Certainly not," said Mary, and she rose and took his arm, that arm which used almost to belong to her, and accompanying them to the cloak-room, borrowed a needle and thread, and mended the dress as carefully as delicate lace could be mended in such a time. Arthur standing by and receiving all Isabella's badinage with good-natured smiles. Oh, Mary felt, if she might but lie down and hide herself in the cloak-room until the ball was over, and that dreadful music silent. But Arthur's eyes were on her, watching her curiously, she thought, and she drew on her gloves with a steady hand, and accompanied them back to her mother, with whom they left her.

She had not danced once; she had begged her mother not to seek for partners, and none had come of themselves, for that evening she had been a perfect "wall-flower," but at the end of the evening Arthur himself came and asked her. She did not refuse—she had no pretence for doing so—she had no intention of showing pique, and she endeavoured to talk in the friendly style of old.

Once again his arm was about her waist—could it be possible that it would be a crime to love him?

"I have a very great favour to ask you," he said, when they were walking after the dance.

"Indeed!" she said, in some surprise; "I will grant it if I can."

"My new house is finished," he said, his voice slightly changing, "and Miss Vaughan is very anxious to see over it, if Mr. and Mrs. Pembroke and you will bring her to-morrow."

Was it pique which induced her eager promise to do so if she could? Shall we condemn her very much if it were so?

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"Oh, yes, if you particularly wish it."

"I do particularly wish it. You cannot do me a greater favour," he said, with emphasis.

"Then you may depend on my persuading papa and mamma to come."

"And have you no curiosity to see my new house?" he asked.

The question was too cruel, and tears sprang to her sweet brown eyes. Her feelings had been overwrought, her strength outdone; but even then she did not try to hide her confusion by an angry word. She only said, unaffectedly, "I hope you have made yourself very comfortable."

"I want you to see," he said, looking straight at her, and with a lurking smile in his blue eyes, "if you think it comfortable enough for a lady. I told Miss Vaughan I intended to be a bachelor all my life, but I do not think she believes me."

But Mary was now on her guard, her rosy blushes had died away to a shadow-like paleness, and no words of his, however thoughtless, were capable of recalling them that night.

"Papa says you understand furnishing," she answered; "and I suppose as there has been so much talk of your new house, there is something worth looking at inside?"

"There will be," said Arthur, smiling, "when all is completed."

She took his words as they were probably meant, as referring to Isabella, and did not reply to them. Even on the part of her cousin she could not assume that he had proposed until he had actually come forward.

"I see mamma looking at me," she said; "she is going, I suppose; let us go to her."

No coldness in her manner, no unkindness to the last. He took her to Mrs. Pembroke, resigning her, gave his arm to Isabella, whom he attended so assiduously to the cloak-room and the carriage, that he quite forgot to say good-night to the others.

Did Mary throw herself passionately down when that night she reached her little chamber? Did she say her heart would break, and, Jonah-like, require that she might die? Did she cast from her the love of parents, the blessings of a well-ordered home, the esteem of many friends, and call them all valueless?

No! strengthened as she had asked to be, and lowly kneeling by the snowy coverlet, she hid her pretty head, as she softly breathed with fervent lips and hallowed thought, "Thy will be done."

The next day at breakfast, she made the request she had promised, and her father and mother both respecting her wishes during her trial time, looked at Isabella's blushing face, and consented without comment. If it must be, the sooner over the better.

It was snowing heavily, but Isabella had a new set of sables, which she was anxious to display, she said; and, as they cost fifty guineas, she laughingly observed, they would enhance her value in the eyes of Mr. Sandford.

No need of that, Mary thought; Isabella looked so charming, and in such high and mysterious spirits, as if some secret were upon her lips, and longing to be disclosed.

"What farce are we called upon to see performed?" asked Mr. Pembroke, not able wholly to withhold his sympathy from the happy Isabella.

Isabella only laughed and coloured. What better answer could she give? It was impossible to be very angry with her, though she had done them so much mischief, and had so much self-assurance and vanity, for she had a way of coming round those who blamed her most, which was irresistible.

"I shall quite eclipse your old cloak, Mary," she said, as she displayed herself in her sables.

"It is not an old cloak," said Mary, trying to be light-hearted; "it was new this winter, and one of Chillingham's newest fashion. Do not call it old," she whispered, "for mamma is looking as if she ought to buy me some sables."

"Well, are they not beautiful?" she said, and proceeded in her rambling, self-loving way to give the whole history of their purchase.

Plain French merinoes were then all the fashion, and the cousins were both so dressed, Isabella in dark becoming blue, and Mary in a rich red-brown. They were both much more on a par in good looks than Mary was inclined to believe; but though she accepted her own low opinion of herself, she did not display any ill-humour. Yet who could fail to be depressed? Had not her golden dream passed away as the rosy hues of a deceptive sunrise? and was not her day "dark and rainy," though her fair face looked out so sweet and calm?

Mrs. Pembroke prepared unwillingly to accompany them, and had not Mary asked her, nothing would have induced her to go and see her sacrificed, as she inwardly termed it.

Mr. Sandford came to fetch them, as Isabella said he had promised to do, and taking her and her sables safe under his umbrella, he would have also taken Mary, but she had already secured her father's arm,

and was talking cheerfully to him of some of the little incidents of the night before, for Mr. Pembroke was sensitive, and often liked to know whether, in the opinion of his wife and daughter, his friends had been as kind and attentive as usual.

In this manner they went along the snowy road, amidst trees nodding with heavy drifts of snow, and ever and again the light laughter of Mr. Sandford and his companion came back to the more sober party behind. Presently they reached the pretty new house, surrounded by trees, which in the coming spring would so adorn it, and entered the little hall which formed so nice an entrance. A steady, middle-aged woman, well known to the Pembrokes, and by them recommended to Mr. Sandford, came forward to receive them, and took them to the dining-room, where a substantial luncheon lay waiting for them. Mr. Pembroke wished the meal at the antipodes, but every feeling of delicacy, as well as interest, prevented his taking offence at any line of conduct not positively aggressive on the part of his junior but richer partner.

"Dear aunt," said Isabella, saucily, and with well-assured ease, "let me see how the seat of honour suits me. May I, Mr. Sandford?"

"Miss Vaughan's word is law," replied the host, who nevertheless, Mary thought, looked pale and thoughtful; and Isabella, with her handsome sables thrown slightly back, took the head of the table, and proceeded to do the honour with mock solemnity.

"Surely they are engaged, and we must make the best of it," thought Mrs. Pembroke; and she felt as if the breast of the partridge, which Isabella so coquettishly carried for her, would choke her.

Mary, only, was calm, easy, and lady-like. How proud her father felt of her self-command at a time when he was obliged to steady himself by taking an extra glass of wine.

"What do you think, aunt, of me as hostess—shall I do?" said Isabella.

"Time enough, my dear, to give an opinion, when we see you perform the part in earnest," replied Mrs. Pembroke.

Was she mistaken, or did Mr. Sandford and Isabella really exchange glances? Certainly, Mr. Sandford rose, and proposed looking over the house; and they started on the tour of the rooms, giving what admiration they could to the snug library, the pretty drawing-room, and the master's study.

Mrs. Pembroke had duly interested herself in a newly-invented kitchen-range, a small house-mangle, and many bachelor contrivances for comfort and economy, and even penetrated to the stable, petted Mr. Sandford's well-known horse, and admired the carriage made for the two pretty little ponies, which looked a great deal too much like a lady's equipage to be fitted for a bachelor's establishment; and when they had done all this, and returned again to the cheerful fire, they began to think their courtesy had well been ended, and they might think of returning home.

"You approve of my house?" asked Mr. Sandford of Mrs. Pembroke.

"All very comfortable and appropriate," said Mrs. Pembroke; "very thoughtfully and nicely furnished, and I wish you as much happiness as you deserve."

"Thank you," he said, turning to Mary, "and do you wish me happy?"

A slight flush—just a little bright blush—and Mary calmly said:

"Indeed I do. I hope you will be very happy, and live here many years, and do a great deal of good, too," she added, in a lower tone, unconsciously lowered for his ear alone—no, there was no anger to the last.

"I must tax your patience once more," he said, also in a lower voice, "to show you one thing more. Do you mind coming with me?"

But a week ago she would have gone with him to the end of the world. Because he had been unkind—nay, only because he had loved Isabella—should she refuse so small a courtesy? and surely he needed some advice, for truly, and without mistake, he was pale, and almost agitated now. Perhaps he thought Isabella over-garlanded and bold. She could assure him she had a good heart at bottom, though careless of speech and self-willed in manner.

She rose from the seat in which she had been resting, and, trying not to look listless, followed him. Mrs. Pembroke would have gone with them, but Mr. Sandford said: "What I have to show is only intended for Miss Pembroke," and her mother let her go.

He led her across a short passage, and paused before a closed door.

"This is Blue Beard's Chamber," he said, then turned the lock and entered a pretty room—small, indeed, but perfect of its kind—a lady's sitting-room, with work-table, writing apparatus, and even a furnished work-box open on the table. He led her in and closed the door.

She betrayed no surprise as she looked quietly round, then turned to him and raised those sweet,

brown eyes, so true to the heart within, kind, forgiving, and gentle.

"You wanted me," she said, with dignity. She had no wish for *tete-à-tetes* with other girls' lovers, and showed that she had no intention to lengthen out the interview.

"I wanted to know if you thought my wife could be happy here?"

"If she really loves you," she said, after a pause, which she pretended to spend in surveying the apartment, "otherwise even such a pretty room as this will fail to make her happy."

"Ay, if she loves me," he said. "Although I admire her more than my life, and respect her more than I admire her, I begin to doubt whether she loves me." "She will not give you any doubt if you make yourself sufficiently understood."

"I have often said that I never would make an offer of marriage unless certain of being accepted. I find now that it was an idle boast; no man can be certain on that point, though of another, still more important, I am certain."

"What point?" asked Mary, innocently.

"Of the merit of her I love; of her sweet temper, spiritual firmness, and feminine delicacy."

Mary knew that love is blind, yet she was a little surprised at such very inappropriate praise.

"And in what way do you wish me to help you?" asked Mary.

"Satisfied on all these points, I want you to enlighten me on that I do not know. Mary, does she love me?"

"I do not know," said Mary, simply.

"You do know!"

"I am not my cousin's confidante."

"But are you not your own? Mary, can you forgive my little deception? You must know that every chair and table in this house was bought and chosen for you—that the house was built for you."

"But, Isabella—"

"Is engaged to my cousin," said Mr. Sandford.

"You need have no apprehensions about her."

"Was it well to put me to this trial?" said Mary.

"You do not know what I have endured."

"Not kind, perhaps, and altogether selfish; but, Mary, I should never have honoured you half so much—never have known all your worth, if I had not carried out my idle whim."

"Not idle—cruel," said Mary.

"Dear girl," he whispered, drawing closer, "forgive me, for I cannot repent. I only love you a hundred times more than I did last week. Come, and let me ask your father for you, for my house is furnished, and I am impatient to get my wife."

He led her out, her hand upon his arm.

"Mr. Pembroke," he said, leading her up to him, "I have furnished my house; will you give me my wife?"

Before the astonished father had time to answer, the impulsive Isabella ran up to Mary, and threw her arms round her neck.

"Dear Mary, believe me, if I had not known that you were as true as gold, I would have given you a hint to keep your temper, lest this jealous man should find you out; as it was, I had no need. Will you forgive me for helping to make him see how much superior you are to other women?"

Slowly the snow fell—but who cared for the snow?—as they returned to Chillingham, Mary, with renewed happiness, leaning upon the arm of Arthur Sandford, and Isabella rattling over her confidences to her amused and easily-forgiving uncle and aunt.

In this manner did Mary become the honoured wife of Arthur Sandford.

J. A. H.

WOMEN COURTING MEN.—And why not? Why should all the business of courtship devolve upon man? It is only fair that a woman should do her share of the work. Besides, many a match that would have proved a happy one has been broken off because the customs of society restrained the woman from saying the right word at the right moment. What is a bashful lover to do, if the lady of his choice will not help him out of the difficulty of popping the question? The fact is, the ladies do perform their share of the courting, not only in semi-civilized communities, as in the instances spoken of below, but in our own enlightened country. "A most extraordinary custom prevails among the Viziers, a powerful tribe occupying an extensive district in Cabul, among the mountains between Persia and India. It is, in fact, a female prerogative that has no parallel among any other people upon the earth, and reverses what we are in the habit of considering the natural order of things—the women choose their husbands, and not the husbands their wives. If a woman be pleased with a man, she sends the drummer of the camp to pin a handkerchief to his cap with the pin she uses to fasten her hair. The drummer watches his opportunity, and does this in public, naming the woman

and the man is obliged to marry her, if he can pay the price to her father." A custom substantially the same prevails among the Sandwich Islanders. We remember once to have asked a good-looking bachelor why he did not get married, and he replied, with a look of innocent simplicity, that "none of the girls had asked him!"

FACETIE.

OF COURSE IT IS.—Is it not probable that concord is made-up of "heart-strings"?—*Fun.*

CURIOUS ADVERTISEMENT.—A country dentist advertises that he "spares no pains" to render his operations satisfactory.

A CHARITY BOY.—At a parish examination, a clergyman asked a charity boy if he had ever been baptized. "No, sir," was the reply, "not as I know of; but I've been waxinated!"

SILK SAILS AND UMBRELLAS.—It is recommended to have the sails of ships made of silk, for it has always been noticed that silk umbrellas go much faster.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF NOTHING.—Miss Muloch declares it to be "flying in the face of Providence" to marry upon "Nothing a week, and that uncertain, very!"

A STRETCHER.—The reason why the Hampshire boys are so tall, "is because they are in the habit of drawing themselves up so as to peep over the hills to see the sun rise. It's dreadful stretching work!"

SINGULAR ACT OF VOLITION.—A single gentleman lately assured us that the lease of his suburban villa had determined; but he did not tell us what it had determined on.—*Fun.*

A FLUMP QUESTION.

The late gallant General Summer, about twenty years ago, was captain of a company of cavalry.

One of his men, Billy G—, had received an excellent education, was of a good family, but an unfortunate habit of mixing too much water with his whisky, had so reduced him in circumstances, that out of desperation he enlisted. Captain Summer soon discovered his qualifications, and as he was a good accountant and excellent penman, he made him his confidential clerk.

At times the old habit would overcome Billy's good resolutions, and a spree would be the result. Captain Summer, though a rigid disciplinarian, disliked to punish him severely, and privately gave him much good advice (after a good sobering in the guard-house), receiving in return many thanks and promises of amendment; but his sprees became more and more frequent.

One day, after Billy had been on a bender, the captain determined on giving him a severe reprimand, and ordered Billy into his presence before he was fully sober. Billy came with his eyes all bloodshot and head hanging down, when the captain accosted him with:

"So, sir, you have been drunk again, and I have to say that this conduct must cease. You are a man of good family, good education, originally a good soldier, neat, cleanly and genteel in appearance, of good address, and a valuable man; yet you will get drunk. Now I shall tell you, once for all, that —"

Here Billy's eyes sparkled, and he interrupted his superior with:

"Beg pardon, captain, did you say that—hic—I was a man of good birth and education?"

"Yes, I did."

"And that I was a good soldier?"

"Certainly."

"That usually I—I am neat and genteel?"

"Yes, Billy."

"And that I am a valuable man?"

"Yes; but you will get drunk."

Billy drew himself up with great dignity, and, throwing himself on his reserved rights, indignantly exclaimed:

"Well, now, Captain Summer, do you really expect to—to get all the cardinal virtues for seven shillings a week?"

BEAT 'EM ALL.—The Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, the ancestor of all the Stoddards—and a troop they are of worthy sons of a worthy sire—had a boy in his employ who was always up to a joke, no matter at whose expense. He went with the parson's horse every morning to drive the cows to pasture. It was on a piece of land some little distance from the village; and here, out of sight, the neighbours' boys were wont to meet him and "race horses" on Sunday morning. Parson Stoddard heard of it, and resolved to catch them at it and put an end to the sport. Next Sunday morning he told Bill he would ride the mare to pasture with the cows, and he (Bill) might stay at home. Bill knew what was in the wind, and taking a short-cut across, was up in the pasture

away ahead of the parson. The boys were there with their horses, only waiting for Bill and his master's mare. He told the boys to be ready, and as soon as the old gentleman arrived, to give the word "Go!" Bill hid himself at the other end of the field, where the race always ended. The parson came jogging along up, and the boys sat demurely on their steeds, as if waiting for "service to begin." But as the good old man rode into line they cried "Go!" and away went the mare with the reverend rider sticking fast, like John Gilpin, but there was no stop to her or to him. Away, ahead of all the rest, he went like the wind; and at the other end of the field Bill jumped up from under the fence and sang out, "I know'd you'd beat, master, I know'd you'd beat!"

SAD, BUT TRUE.

Young Lady.—Why, the draft is nothing, after all. The newspapers say that there was any quantity of fun going on at the drawings.

Veteran (who has been through the mill).—The drawings are well enough; but you see, miss, after a man's been drawn he's liable to be *en-graved*.

WILFULNESS OF CATS.—Why does a cat, in spite of the accusations of the cook, never do anything accidentally? Because it does everything on purr puss.

TURNING STAIRS.—A man was found one night, climbing an overshot wheel in a fulling mill. He was asked what he was doing? He said he was trying to get up to bed, but somehow or other the stairs wouldn't hold still.

O-CUM.—"Captain H., how do you spell oakum?" Mr. W. here, the ship-carpenter, has given it a new touch. "Why, o-a-k o-nk, h-u-m, hum, oakum, of course," replied the captain. "That's all hum, but he's rather worse than you—he's written in one place in his bill o-k-u-m-b, and in another o-c-u-m!"

PUNCHING HIS WIFE.—"How can you, my dear, prefer punch to wine?" "Because, my dear, 'tis so like matrimony: such a charming compound of opposite qualities." "Aye, my lord, I am the weak part, I suppose?" "No, my love, you are the sweet with a dash of the acid, and no small portion of the spirit."

ORIGIN OF A COMMON PHRASE.—Before the introduction of carpets, to cover the floor with straw or rushes was deemed so necessary a point of courtesy, that when not performed it was said that the host "did not care a rush or a straw" for his guest—hence the origin of the expression so common now.

CROSS NANCE.

A gentleman who was travelling in Yorkshire some time ago says he called at a house on the roadside to ask for a drink of water, when the following colloquy took place between himself and a boy who answered his summons:

Traveller.—"Well, my boy, how long have you lived here?"

Boy.—"I don't know, sir; but my mother says since I was born."

Traveller.—"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

Boy.—"Yes, a few."

Traveller.—"How many?"

Boy.—"Ten or eleven."

Traveller.—"Pretty healthy here isn't it?"

Boy.—"Yes; but sometimes we have a little ager."

Traveller.—"Any of you got it now?"

Boy.—"Yes a few on us goin' to have the shakes this afternoon."

Traveller.—"How many?"

Boy.—"Why, all on us, except sister Nance; and she's such a cross one that the ager won't live on her; and if it did she'd so deuced contrary she wouldn't shake, no how you could fix it."

THE RUSSIANS AMONG THE YANKEES.—The New York papers give long and amusing accounts of the visit of the Russian Admiral and his officers to the Falls of Niagara. Here is one incident of the journey:—"The Admiral occupied a seat in the front passenger car, next to the lunch car, and being dressed in citizen's clothes, with the exception of a white-edged navy cap which was like all the rest, the people were unable to distinguish him from the others. At Rochester, however, the crowd was so great and the greetings so boisterous and enthusiastic that the Admiral could not resist the temptation to thrust his head out of the window and bow his thanks. But he had cause to repent his temerity, for he was immediately seized by the hands and arms by a dozen citizens at once, and with his body half-through the window and bent over, was compelled to go through a process of handshaking for several minutes. It was a wonder they did not pull the old hero through the window to the pavement, but they didn't—probably because some of his friends held him by his coat-tail. His affability and good-nature did not, however, desert him at this rude treatment, but he took it as it was meant, and laughed heartily with the rest at the ludicrousness of the scene. While this was going on, a crowd of young men and boys rushed into the rear cars, and marched to and fro

in single file, inspecting the Russians on either side as though they were so many neat cattle exposed for sale in their stalls. Nor were they at all backward or sotto voce in their comments on the strangers. "Wall," exclaimed one of the rougher sort, "they don't amount to much after all—only dwarfs with Dutch faces." "Don't speak so blunt, nor so loud," rejoined a better-dressed youth; "draw it milder—say diminutive in stature, Hollandish in visage." "Who the d— I supposed you could talk Rooshan?" replied the rough; "where did you learn it?"

HOW THE INVITATION WAS RECEIVED!

ALWAYS desirous of keeping our millions of readers well informed on the current events of the day, directly we heard that our august ally, the Emperor Nap—(*lucus a non lucendo*, so called from his well-known wide-awake character)—oleon was about to issue invitations for a Congress of sovereigns, half-sovereigns, and even the small change of royalty, to consider the present state of affairs, we felt it our duty to discover how the imperial message would be received. To will and to do are with us synonymous terms. The tap of communication was at once turned on, and the required draught of knowledge obtained. At several of the courts, however, objections were at first raised to our ambassador being present when the august letter arrived, but on the presentation of the last new number of *Fun*, as a credential, the combined wit therein contained, everywhere put to flight all cavillings at our presence.

England.—Of course, as a lady I can't attend, and who is there to send? If John goes he is sure to get into some mess! Look what a dreadful business he made of it at Vienna! How I wish Pam himself would take the matter in hand!

Prussia.—Sappercloth! It's all very well for him to summon Congresses; he hasn't got a right divine to maintain, or a constitution that don't agree with him. And I know he would like to get hold of my Rhine, Donner wetter!

Russia.—Ha! ha! a Congress! Very good. With all my heart! But if he thinks I'm going to pay any attention to the rotten treaties of 1815, and let my Poles have their liberty, he'll find himself mistaken, that's all.

Austria.—What is he up to now? Wants me to give up Venice, I suppose; and perhaps he'll promise me another licking as in 1859, if I don't.

Belgium.—Deary me! I wonder what's the matter? He's a married man already, so it's nothing in the match-making line. Shouldn't be at all surprised if it was a little arbitration business.

Italy.—Corpo di Baccho; I don't half like going. Nap's too clever for me; and I can't afford to part with any more provinces, even to gain Rome.

Spain.—Here's an unexpected honour! Invited to a Congress! and this comes of being civil to his wife!

Sweden.—Yes, I'll go. Perhaps I may get back Finland from those thieves over the way.

Denmark.—Congress? Certainly! If he'll guarantee me Schleswig and Holstein; that would be doing some good; but if not, I don't see the use of it.

As for the rest of the kings and kinglets they were only too pleased at being noticed at all to have any opinion on the subject.—*Fun.*

COMFORT AT THE SEA-SIDE.

The most intense sensation was occasioned this last season, at an English watering-place, by the discovery in a lodging-house, that of 13 bedroom windows, there were no fewer than three that had not their sashlines broken, and as many as one even that after much persuasion you could open at the top. Of 11 bedroom candlesticks, no fewer than four were provided with extinguishers, and three bore some faint traces of having actually been cleaned within the present year.

Of course every chimney smoked when a fire was attempted; but in two out of eight rooms you could escape suffocation if you only kept a window open and the door ajar. Out of half-a-score of looking-glasses there were two which were not cracked, and three of the remaining eight, if you only propped them properly, did not twirl round more than six times while you shaved, and brushed your hair. Of a dozen doors not more than eleven had loose handles, that came off at a touch, and one was so well hung upon its hinges that it actually could be locked.

It was also ascertained that of the leash of easy (?) chairs which had been liberally furnished, there was one that you could sit in without much inconvenience, if you didn't mind the chance of tumbling backwards once an hour or so, through a rickety hind-leg, and another which might possibly have been found a softish seat if it had not been that somebody had broken all the springs in it.

One of the three carving-knives was, after a day's sharpening, made capable of cutting; and of a dozen silver (?) forks, five had some faint vestige of their pristine plate upon them, and no fewer than six had their full complement of prongs. It was discovered,

too, at tea-time, after many patient trials, that, if probed and poked with frequency, the tea-pot spout would pour; and, provided that the tea-maker was careful to retain the proper angle of inclination, she might possibly succeed in half-filling a tea-cup, without dropping the lid into it more than half-a-dozen times.

It was likewise ascertained that of half-a-score of cups three only had their handles off, and only six were leaky; and of eleven wine-glasses as many as two even were of the same pattern, and not more than nine were chipped. By similar good housewifery one of the two decanters was provided with a stopper, and of the four dishes for vegetables one had actually a lid. When such careful heed is paid to the comfort of our sea-side visitors, who can be surprised to hear that when people want a pleasure-trip they never go abroad for it.—*Punch's Pocket Book* for 1864.

MOTHER WIT.—First Coster: I say, Bill, wot's the meanin' o' Congress?—Second Coster: A shee heel. Female of Conger.—*Punch*.

Q: Where does Neptune stable his horses?—A: Why, wherever the Sea-Mews may be, of course.—*Punch*.

RIDICULOUS PRIDE.—A young nobleman, whose *hauteur* has become a proverb and a byword among his friends, recently carried his exclusiveness to such an absurd pitch as absolutely to cut one of his own wisdom-teeth.—*Fun*.

SCENE IN COURT.—A learned counsel, of an unusually conscientious turn of mind, was so upset last week by the discovery that his client was a scoundrel, that he threw up his brief. The learned gentleman is progressing favourably.—*Fun*.

A GREATER THAN WELLINGTON.

I will relate a story told of a great sheep-farmer—not one of the old "gentleman tenants," verily—who, though he could neither read nor write, had nevertheless made a large fortune by sheep-farming, and was open to any degree of flattery as to his abilities in this department of labour. A purchaser, knowing his weakness, and anxious to ingratiate himself into his good graces, ventured one evening over their whisky toddy to remark:

"I am of opinion, sir, that you are a greater man than even the Duke of Wellington!"

"Hoot, toot!" replied the sheep-farmer, modestly hanging his head with a pleasing smile. "That's too much—too much by far—by far."

But his guest, after expatiating for a while upon the great powers of his host in collecting and concentrating upon a flock of sheep, suggested the question.

"Could the Duke of Wellington have done that?"

The sheep farmer thought a little, took a glass of toddy, and replied:

"The Duke of Wellington was, no doot, a clever man; very, very clever, I believe. They tell me he was a good soper; but, then, d'ye see, he had reasonable men to deal with—captains, and majors, and generals, who could understand him, every one of them both officers and men; but I'm not so sure, after all, if he could manage, say two thousand sheep, besides, cattle, that could not understand one word he said, Gaelic or English! I doot it—I doot it! But I have done that!"

The inference was evident.

WRONGFUL DISMISSAL.—A footman, who was recently discharged from the service of a gentleman in Eaton Square, for inattention to the parlour-bell, is about to proceed against his late master for wrongful dismissal. The master alleges that the man was dismissed because he wasn't found to answer.—*Fun*.

IRONING DONE HERE.—Russia is very busy plating vessels of war, and we are supplying iron for the purpose. At the same time, should war break out between us and the Muscovites, the latter would find that, though we do a great deal of ironing, we have not sold our mangle.—*Fun*.

RIVALS.—A young gentleman, visiting his intended, met a rival who was somewhat advanced in years, and wishing to insult him, inquired how old he was. "I can't exactly tell," replied the other, "but I can tell you that a donkey is older at twenty than a man at sixty."

ENLIGHTENMENT.—"Mr. Smith, you say you once officiated in a pulpit—do you mean by that you preached?" "No, sir; I held the candle for a man who did." "Ah, the court understood you differently. They supposed that the discourse came from you." "No, sir; I only throwed a light on it."

NARROW ESCAPE.—An aged cripple, when in the act of crossing Oxford Circus, accidentally fell under the notice of a benevolent old gentleman. We are happy to say that he suffered no inconvenience whatever from the accident.—*Fun*.

NO NEWS FOR RUSSIA.—The Russians complain that their atrocities in Poland are greatly magnified by

report. Can they wonder at what gets bruited abroad when they are so brute-ed at home? They cannot expect impartial reports from a country where every mere spectator runs a risk of becoming a knout-sider, and being treated to the lash under the eye of Government.—*Fun*.

A TICKET-COLLECTOR was the other day detected in saying "if you please" to the passengers in a third-class penny-a-mile carriage while asking for their tickets. For this and other acts of civility to the penny-a-milers he was most properly dismissed, his conduct and language being decidedly "un-parliamentary."—*Fun*.

TWAS EVE

'Twas eve; the stars came, one by one,
Into the azure sky;
Their gentle presence seemed to soothe
Like some sweet melody.

The breezes played among the trees,
Or bore upon their wing
The plaintive note of some lone bird,
Whose harp was sorrowing.

Within the home of pride and wealth
A stately mother led
Her fair young daughter forth to meet
The one she was to wed.

And there they stood—that bridal pair.
No shadow marked his brow,
But over hers lingered one which told
How truthless was her vow.

It could not be—her path was one
Which should have led 'mong flowers,
For love to her was life and light,
The dreams of girlhood's hours.

Yes! they were wed—but o'er her heart
Swept many a mournful strain,
Whose first sweet chords of tenderness
Would never wake again.

Oh, no! far, far in foreign lands
He roved who won her heart;
Now each may love, yet each in vain,
For they must live apart.

Ah! love and life—what mysteries
Are mingled with these words;
They have the power to stir the heart
And wake its deepest chords.

L. L.

GEMS.

SOCIETY.—Society, like shaded silk, must be viewed in all its situations, or its colours will deceive you.

KNOW THYSELF.—Every man is a volume, if you but knew how to read him.

The little I have seen of the world teaches me to look upon the errors of others in sorrow, not in anger. When I take the history of one heart that has sinned and suffered, and represent to myself the struggles and temptations it has passed through—the brief pulsations of joy, the feverish inquietude of hope and fear, the pressure of want, the desertion of friends—I would fain leave the erring soul of my fellow-man with Him from whose hand it came.

WHEN thou shalt have the opportunity of a thing thou dost desire, lose no time to seize it, for the things of this world change so often, that no man can say he hath a thing until he grasp it. And when any which displease thee be proposed, seek to put it off as long as thou art able; for we see every day that time brings forth chances which may free thee from that trouble; and there is that saying of the sages to be understood, profit by time's vantage.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO STOP COUGHING.—Slight irritation of the throat may be relieved by sipping a little thick slippery elm tea, or by sucking a piece of gum arabic. These articles coat over the mucous membrane, and prevent the irritation of the air. A very few drops of pargoric held in the mouth and allowed to trickle down the throat, will allay coughing. The best cough medicine for children, one which we have used for several years with entire satisfaction, is the following:—Mix in a phial equal parts of pargoric, castor oil, and syrup of ipecac. Always shake well just before using. A few drops of this swallowed, but not washed down by water or other fluid, will almost always soothe a cough. Repeat the dose as often as the coughing returns. From one-fourth to one-half a teaspoonful, or even a whole teaspoonful, may be given when a lesser quantity does not suffice. A large dose after a full meal may produce a little nausea. Children subject to coughs should eat very light suppers, and indeed

all children should eat much less and simpler food at night than at morning or noon. The above mixture may be kept on hand ready prepared, as it does not deteriorate if kept corked. It may interest those afraid of mineral medicines (though they partake freely of common salt, which is a mineral) to know that the ingredients are all "vegetable."

NOTES ON THE VENTILATION OF INTERIORS.—It has struck the writer—particularly lately—that a great deal yet remains to be done respecting the ventilation of interiors in which large numbers assemble for several purposes. He was particularly impressed with this after visiting several national and ragged schools, in which there were, in some instances, windows at each side, and the space was considerable. The windows were open at the top, but, notwithstanding, there was the taint of that heavy gas which is suggestive of typhus fever. Even in the new courts of the Clerkenwell Session House, which have been only recently constructed, this fault is to be found. In churches, some of them not of old date, especially on Monday mornings, after the congregations have occupied the places on the Sundays, this poisonous ingredient may be found in dangerous excess; and it seems to be caused to a great extent by the attention which is shown to the passing of currents of fresh air through the upper parts, and neglecting the lower; by this means the heavy gas is allowed to lodge in quantities near the floor. The same fault will be often found in concert and ballrooms, and in theatres, in some of which the "gods" are better ventilated than the grave and substantial visitors to the pit. In many private and other houses there is often neglect of ventilation below, especially in bedrooms.

STATISTICS.

THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD.—A Berlin professor finds that Europe contains 272,000,000 inhabitants, Asia 720,000,000, Africa 89,000,000, America 200,000,000, and Polynesia 2,000,000—total 1,283,000,000. Of this little crowd, about 32,000,000 die in each year, which is 87,761 a day, or 61 per minute.

THE area of St. Domingo contains some 28,000 square miles, with a population of 1,000,000. The area of Cuba contains some 42,000 square miles; the exact number of the population is not known, but it must be approaching 2,000,000, and it was with the facts relative to the negroes in St. Domingo patent to his memory, that Lord John Russell, in 1846, said:—That by relieving the slaveowners of the extra duties on their produce, in British ports, free negro labour would then become so much more profitable that it would speedily drive slave produce out of our markets, while, at present, nearly one-half of our imports of muscovado sugar is slave grown, against 5 tons 4 cwt. of other than British free labour grown sugar in 1844.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PORCELAIN REFLECTORS.—White porcelain reflectors have been added to some of the Paris gas lamps, adding greatly to the light produced.

A STATUE TO GARIBALDI.—A committee has been formed at Luino, in Lombardy, for the purpose of erecting a grand monument to Garibaldi. It is to consist of a colossal statue.

LUTHER'S MARRIAGE-RING.—The marriage-ring of Martin Luther has come into the possession of a Berlin artisan. The Royal Museum will buy it. There appears to be no doubt of the relic being genuine.

GOLD COINAGE AT THE MINT.—The Royal Mint has just commenced a heavy coinage of gold, which will occupy all the resources of that establishment up to February, 1864.

THE MAYOR OF GATESHEAD.—A few days ago the Mayor of Gateshead refused to toast "The army, navy, and volunteers," on account of the late affair at Kagosima, of which he disapproved. The volunteers accordingly refused to escort him to church, as has been annually done hitherto.

ON Saturday, at Russell Hall Furnaces, near Dudley, the earth over an old mine gave way, and two horses which were passing the spot fell in and were suffocated. The carter narrowly escaped. Some hours before he had said he dreamt that he and two horses were swallowed up in the earth.

TALL SHOOTING.—What a wonderful feat that was of Sir A. P. Gordon Cumming's the other day in Athol Forest! To kill two stags right and left, load again and bring down two more, and then load again and pot a fifth, is "tall shooting," especially to one who knows what red deer are. It may say a good deal for the breech-loader, but it says more for Sir Alexander's skill and nerve.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The Desk-Book of English Synonyms. By JOHN SHERER. London: Groombridge and Sons.—This is a book designed to afford assistance in composition, and also to be a work of reference when the proper word is required to enable us to express ourselves with clearness, accuracy, and precision. It contains upwards of four thousand synonyms—a fact sufficient in itself to prove its great value to the corresponding secretary, to the student, as well as to all writers who desire to attain to compositional excellence in the English language. Mr. Sherer has executed his task with judgment and discrimination; and on carefully examining the contents of the volume we have found that it amply proves its "indispensability" to those for whom it has been composed.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MODER.—They are of no value whatever. Neither of the men were very distinguished.

FANNY FERN would like to hear again from W. W. through *THE LONDON READER*, and would be happy to exchange *carte-de-visites*.

J. M. R.—Time alone will remove the marks. Your handwriting is peculiar, but very good.

POLLY MARTIN.—Bony rosin soap is yellow, and made with tallow, rosin, and caustic soda.

ALICE AND EDITH.—To Rio you would have to make a bargain; probably from £15 to £20. To Australia, about £25. London is the best port to sail from.

G. O.—In pronouncing St Helena, the second *e* is short. St Hel-e-na.

REGINA.—The most suitable food for dinner is roast or boiled meat, with bread and vegetables.

R. A.—A mere superstition similar to that existing among the lower Italians, who play a tune called the *tantarella* to counteract the bite of the tarantula.

A STUDENT.—The sepiæ used by painters is not a manufactured article, but a black liquor extracted from the fish sepiæ.

A SCHOLAR.—It is not the custom to attend, on occasions of festivity, attired in deep mourning. Good taste and good feeling require that a costume be worn in accordance with the spirit of the hour.

EMMA.—Puddings made of rice, sage, tapioca, barley, Iceland moss, &c. are very nourishing, especially when prepared with milk. They are the most suitable kind for children, and may be very agreeably flavoured by simple means.

DAVID GRANT.—Every man should know the number of beats his pulse should make in a minute. Every physician knows this, in a man in a healthy state, and if the number is above or below the natural standard, he judges of the nature of his illness and acts accordingly.

J. D.—We think your views regarding our social habits are somewhat contracted. You will find that nine out of every ten cases of pauperism might be traced to the mispending of money rather than to the impossibility of earning it.

H. GRAHAM has long been in search of an amiable young lady with a view to matrimony. He is of middle height, dark complexion, black hair, dark brown eyes, and is considered rather good-looking, and has a private income of £120 per annum.

ANNIE H. begs to inform the gentlemen readers of *THE LONDON READER* that she is disengaged, and has a fair, fresh complexion, light blue eyes, is considered good-looking, of middle height, and of good family. The gentleman who would correspond with her must be tall, dark, and with not less than an income of £200 a year. Not a number passed from our office without the gratis publication being enclosed in it.

E. W. is desirous of meeting with a suitable partner; and does not wish for a wealthy husband, but one that she could love and look up to as a protector. She is a widow, of thirty-seven, without incumbrance, and has no fortune to recommend her; but she has a good education, and is thoroughly domesticated.

ANETTE.—A book is a very appropriate gift, a biography, or a poem, or a volume of instructive essays; or you may present some article adapted to the known tastes of the person it is intended for. A desk, a brooch, pin, or a watch, would be particularly suitable. Vol. I. of *THE LONDON READER* would be a very appropriate gift.

G. L. P. wishes to correspond with a young lady of prepossessing appearance and manners, combined with good temper, with a view to matrimony; he is twenty-one years of age, fair complexion, and in a respectable situation. Should this meet the approbation of any of our fair readers, he will be happy to exchange *carte-de-visites*. Handwriting is very fair.

ALMA AND EUGENE wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. Alma is tall and graceful, has round face, black hair, dark brown laughing eyes; is twenty-one years of age, and by her friends considered very good-looking; EUGENE is tall and fair, has chestnut hair, brown laughing eyes, is nineteen years of age, and by her friends considered very good-looking, and they would be most happy to exchange *carte-de-visites*.

ANNIE AND MARIA have had an introduction to two young gentlemen, and are quite in love with them. The gentlemen, however, are very shy. ANNIE AND MARIA "do not know how to proceed, and want our advice." We advise ANNIE AND MARIA not to be impatient. Let them wait a wee; say till the new year—which will be leap-year—comes in; and if in the meantime matters have not advanced, ANNIE AND MARIA will be privileged to give some indications to the timid swains that their attentions would not be objected to.

MAD-CAT GIRL.—Your string of queries nearly took away our breath; but as you are such an enthusiastic admirer of *THE READER*, we will answer all your inquiries. 1. The "Vandoeis" are the inhabitants of the village of Vandoeis, in Piedmont. The people were also called Waldenses, from Peter Waldo, one of the early opponents of the Church of Rome, who was banished with his followers from France, about 1160. 2. If you mean a dramatic poet, Shakespeare is

certainly the greatest; Milton is our greatest epic poet. 3. In taking wine, no complimentary phrase is now necessary; the custom is quite exploded, or, at least, is "more honoured in the breach than the observance." 4. As to Leap-year, we hardly know what to tell you; but if you look your prettiest all the year, and as if you *didn't* want a proposal, probably you'll obtain one at least. 5. From the general tenor of your letter and its writing, we should think you are a rather piquant personage, with a large dash of *espiglerie* in your character. We thank you very heartily for your efforts to extend the circulation of *THE LONDON READER* amongst your friends; and so, *au revoir*.

JESSIE.—You must endeavour to reconcile yourself more to society, which is like shaded silk, and must be viewed in all situations or its colours will deceive you.

A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER.—Never put pickles into a glazed jar. Glass or unglazed jars are the proper receptacles for acids.

RICHARD GRANT.—We have received your facetious note, and as you ask us what you should do, we will tell you as briefly as we can. Live temperately, go to church regularly, attend to your own affairs, love all the pretty girls, marry one of them, live like a man and die like a Christian.

JESSIE.—We are sorry you should find it so very difficult to acquire a habit of content; but perhaps you pursue the wrong plan. Listen to us, and remember that contentment consists, not in adding more fuel, but in taking away some fire; not in multiplying riches, but in contracting your desires. Worldly riches, like nuts, tear the clothes in gathering them, hurt the teeth in cracking them, and do not fill the stomach in eating them.

ISMAEL.—If the calumny has no ground of truth in it, let it pass unheeded. The famous Boerhaave used to say, "The sparks of calumny will be presently extinct of themselves unless you blow them." And another more poetically remarked that the malice of ill tongues cast upon a good man, is only like a mouthful of smoke blown upon a diamond, which, though it clouds its beauty for the present, yet it is easily rubbed off, and the gem restored, with little trouble to its owner.

A TRIO.—Learn a foreign language—French, for example—as you learned your mother tongue; that is, in a few words. It is the way which nature herself follows, and is the same which the mother points out to us in speaking to her child, repeating to him a hundred times the same words, combining them imperceptibly, and succeeding in this way to make him speak the same language she speaks. To learn in this manner is not a study, but an amusement.

A HEART TO LOVE AND A HOME TO GO TO.
The birds have a nest, where at eve they may rest,
The rivers, an ocean-home to flow to,
But I am alone, with crown nor throne,
A heart to love or a home to go to.

I ask not wealth, it may wing by stealth,
And fly beyond where the breezes blow to,
But an arm to guide, or friend, true tried,
A heart to love and a home to go to.

I want not fame, 'tis an empty name,
And will change as oft as the winds that blow do;
But one change made, wouldn't 't be so bad,
For a heart to love, and a home to go to.

My heart's as free as the chainless sea,
And sweet *pet-names* is not a foe to;
But long for rest on a kindred breast,
A heart to love, and a home to go to.

My wealth you may have, for I've none to give,
But a large, warm heart, that won't say so to
A troth I can trust, a soul that is just,
A heart to love and a home to go to.

DELIA.—The true secret of happiness is to take it as it comes to us, moment by moment, in the little hourly rounds of our every-day duties. Looking forward to happiness in the future and neglecting that which is present, is something like converting the chase of butterflies into an occupation.

LOGIC.—Arguments are very good, but facts are by far the most convincing. They easily walk through preconceived opinions, long-cherished conclusions and favourite hypotheses. They offer a less ostentatious but a far sterner resistance, a far more invulnerable bulwark than any other form of defence that truth can adopt; regarded as arguments they have the transcendent merit of convincing without irritating.

A HOUSEWIFE.—Requesting the durability of preserved meats we have undoubted testimony. Recently a rich merchant of Vienna gave a banquet, to which several scientific gentlemen were invited. Some tin boxes, containing beef, found last summer at Spitzberg, were opened, and the guests invited to partake of their contents. The inscriptions on the boxes showed that they had been left there by Captain Parry in 1826, thirty-seven years ago. The meat was still quite fresh, perfectly free from smell, and the taste was excellent.

VENETIA.—We are really at a loss to tell you how to improve your beauty; but it is not to the heightening of colour you should look so much as the improvement of features. Those who wish to realize the full power of personal beauty must cherish noble hopes and purposes; by having something to do, and something to live for which is worthy of humanity, and which, by expanding the capacities of the soul, gives expansion and symmetry to the body which contains it.

J. PRINCE.—Honesty is the strict adherence to the duties of justice, morality, and honour. Juvenal compared the rectitude of the mind to the bosom of the sea; but commentators have not discovered the justness of the resemblance. The sea receives into its bosom all the rivers which roll over the surface of our globe; and honesty receives into hers all the human sympathies and moralities which go to make up the sum of virtue. By being moral, and faithfully fulfilling our obligations, we acquire esteem and obtain assistance when we need it, whilst, at the same time, we enjoy within our own breasts a reign of peace, which is not granted to those who act differently.

D. F.—We never heard of any naturalist becoming eminent, if he was a lover of his ease, his arm-chair or his bed. Speculation and philosophy may be pursued on a couch or even on a bed of down, but nature must be observed in the open air. We have known men, who, with indefatigable per-

severance, would gather glow-worms in the evening and snails in the morning, watch the daisy close and open; hear the owl shriek at midnight, and the lark carol at sunrise; hunt insects in the heat of noon, and travel miles on the unfrequented banks of rivers, through gloomy ravines, and over mountain summits, thinking themselves well repaid by the finding of a moss, a fern, or other wildling of the waste.

CATO.—Yes, both France and Germany annually publish more books than we do; but whether this is to be taken as a proof of their superior intelligence we will not venture to determine. In 1862, there were published in Germany, 14,200 books; in France, 11,500; and in England, 4,500.

INQUIRE.—There are three rivers in England that go by the name of Colne, one in Hertfordshire, falling into the Thames at Staines; the second in Essex, passing Colchester, and expanding into an estuary near that town; the third in Gloucester, and after a course of twenty-five miles, joining the Isis near Lechlade.

MARIE.—Natural teeth, clean and sound, are essential to the good looks of every person. Defective teeth mar the handsomest features and make us turn away our eyes from a countenance otherwise faultlessly beautiful. Sound teeth not only add to the comfort and personal appearance, but contribute largely to the health of all; hence special and scrupulous attention should be paid to them daily, from our earliest years, or rather from the time when the first permanent tooth makes its appearance, about the sixth year.

A. R. S. sends the following definition of the word "Alabama." This word in the Indian language signifies, "Here we rest." A story is told of a tribe of Indians who fled from a relentless foe in the trackless forest in the southwest. Weary and travel-worn, they reached a noble river which flowed through a beautiful country. The chief of the band struck his tent-pole in the ground and exclaimed, "Alabama! Alabama!" Here we shall rest! Here we shall rest! In allusion to the ship Alabama, we may observe that she has rested little since she was launched upon the waters.

ALICIA.—The wedding morn may be viewed as the happiest of our lives. It breaks upon the young heart like gentle spring upon the flowers of earth. It is the hour of bounding, joyous expectancy when the ardent spirit, arming itself with bold hope, looks with undaunted mien upon the dark and terrible future. It is the hour when thought borrows the liveliest of goodness and humanity, looking from his tenement across the common of life, shakes off its heavy load of sorrows, and gladly swings to its hour, full of blissful contemplation, rich promises and the soul's happy revels. It is a happy morn for the loved and loving bride, who sees in the eyes of her adorer as if

"Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars,"
G. PRATT.—The Demon or Genius was a kind of spirit, which, according to the ancients, presided over the actions of mankind. Some of the ancient philosophers maintained that every man had two of these demons, the one bad and the other good. The demon or genius, as described by Socrates is very remarkable. It informed him of many particulars, and hindered him from the commission of all crimes and impiety. These demons received Divine honours in process of time, and altars and statues were erected *gratias actas*—to the genius of the place.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER."
SIR.—Severe winters invariably follow the class of weather which has characterized the present autumn. High winds have prevailed, with excess of rain, and the temperature above the average. Parallel seasons to the present occurred in 1837-8, 1844-5, 1854-5, and 1860-61.

In 1838 a great frost set in January 1; this continued two months. On the 20th January the thermometer was at 3 deg. below zero. In February the Thames and Severn were partially frozen over.

In 1845 hard weather began February 28, and lasted four weeks. March was the coldest on record, even exceeding the memorable cold March of 1857. On the 13th of that month the thermometer stood 11 deg. Fahrenheit.

In 1855 severe frost commenced January 16, and February was the coldest ever known in England. The 18th of February registered 26 deg. below the freezing point. This frost continued six weeks. February 19, Thames and Severn again partially frozen over.

In 1860 intensely cold weather set in December 17, and continued with great severity until the third week in January. Christmas Day, 1860, found the thermometer 2 deg. below zero.

The prevailing weather throughout the autumn periods of the above years partook of similar description to the present autumn—warm, rainy, and boisterous.

I am of opinion, therefore, that we shall have a winter of most intense frost. Whether its advent will be in December, or deferred till after Christmas, cannot now be stated; but the longer the inclement season which I anticipate is delayed the greater will be, I apprehend, its unremitting severity.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS L. PLANT.
Member of the British Meteorological Society.
Birmingham, Nov. 24.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—J. D.—A. M.—Rachel—X. Y. Z.—Garibaldi—A Little Fairy—Lines to Delia—A. McIntosh—Jim Crow—Aluminium—David—R. O.—P. Roberts—Jane Herbert—Homo—N. P.—Silvestre—A Young Woman—Ode to Winter—S. Appleby—T. Forsyth—Annie Laurie—A Vocalist—T. A. N.—A. P. S.—Albert—S. Ravenscroft—P. Simpson—D. Taylor—G. Armstrong—A. Ellis—Catharine—Tom Wymon—Alfred—Anne Boleyn—J. Derkin—Sam Hughes—E. Williams—Violetta—A. Marksman—Jessie—A. Saxon—&c.

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